

The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads

The symbolism of a Grand Swan used to explain the wisdom of spiritual and metaphysical principles by the Upanishads.

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English Exposition by:-

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DEDICATION

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY BELOVED LORD RAM

I dedicate this Book to Lord Sri Ram who is my dearest of dear, most beloved, the essence of my life and being, and for whom, and for whose pleasure, and on whose behest, and on whose divine mission, this book is dedicated.

Nothing that I write is of my own creation. It is the Lord who is getting it done. So I deserve no credit. However, being an ordinary man like the rest of us, I may have committed errors, and for those I beg forgiveness. I hope this book will help to continue the great tradition of singing the glories of the different aspects of same indivisible one Divinity in order to meet diverse needs of the Soul, the Spirit, one such being to find peace and happiness amidst the surrounding turmoil of the world by being able to spend some time in the thoughts of the Divine Being, the same 'Parmatma', the same Lord known by different names in different tongues.

No creature is perfect; it's foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or one butterfly—he went on endlessly evolving and designing newer forms. So, I have done my best, I have poured out my being in these books. Honestly, I am totally incompetent—it was the Lord who had done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were merely an instrument in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be 'his very own' is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions on my part that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope my readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

I submit this effort at the holy feet of my beloved Lord Ram whom even Lord Shiva had revered and worshipped. And surely of course to Lord Hanuman who was a manifestation of Shiva himself. Finding no words to express my profound gratitude to Ram, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

I hope the reader will find my book useful and interesting. Since English is an international language, this book will help the English speaking world to access this masterpiece of classical Indian scriptural text.

“He leadeth me! O blessed tho't!
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!
What-e'er I do, wher-e'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!” [A Hymn]

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia
Author

The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads

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Preface

The bird *Swan*, or “Hansa / Hans”, pronounced as ‘**Haṃsa**’ in Sanskrit, is considered as the most pure, clean, wise, erudite and clever among the birds. It is said to eat pearls, which means it picks up and accepts only the best amid the variety of things available to it in the form of an assortment of various gems and jewels representing the dazzling charms of this world. It is also reputed to drink milk leaving aside the water content in it symbolising its ability to imbibe the essence and the best, and leave the rest aside. It is also the vehicle of Goddess Saraswati, the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, speech and learning, indicating that it bears these glorious virtues.

The Upanishads have used the term ‘Hansa’, a divine Swan, as a metaphor representing a wise person who has realized the ultimate Truth of his self and the Reality of existence, one who has attained the highest state of pure Consciousness and become one with the Absolute. The Upanishadic verses quoted in this book tell us about the thought processes of enlightened souls, how they feel and think about themselves vis-à-vis the external world of falsehoods. Such Hansa-like souls are able to remain calm and peaceful internally amidst the turmoil of the surrounding world. Since they have purified their inner-self and have a clear intellect, they can judiciously pick the right path to be followed in their lives with a clear understanding of it, which enables them to reach their ultimate goal of attaining deliverance, emancipation and salvation that grants eternal bliss, peace and beatitude without facing undue hurdles on the path. It will not be wrong to say therefore, that since they are personified forms of purity of soul and its holiness, they represent Brahm, the Supreme Being himself, personified in their forms. This eclectic view of one’s ‘self’ is no where better expressed than in Krishna Yajur Veda’s Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 81-110, and the way of life of such an enlightened and renunciate person is narrated in Parma Hansa Upanishad, verse nos. 1-4. Both are included in this Book.

The reference to a Hansa or a Swan while describing a creature implies that the concerned creature is highly wise, clever, adroit, enlightened, intelligent, pure, sagacious and erudite like the swan inasmuch as he is able to differentiate between the good and the bad, the virtuous and evil, the righteous and the unrighteous, one who accepts all that is good and shuns all that is bad. That is why goddess Saraswati, the patron goddess of wisdom and truthful knowledge, rides on a swan because this bird symbolizes a living being who possesses excellent virtues, one who is wise and enlightened, one who is pure and uncorrupt, one who is holy, pious and divine.

This nature of natural purity, holiness and divinity is intrinsic to the primary form of all the living beings which is their 'true self' known as the Atma, but the problem is that this state relates to the real and truthful form of the Jiva, the living being, and not what the external world thinks him to be. This 'truthful and real' form of the Jiva is his Atma, his soul, his pure consciousness, and not his gross body with its organs of perception and action. It means in effect that the Atma possesses all the grand virtues for which the divine Swan is a metaphor and a symbol. So, when a self-realised and enlightened ascetic says 'Hansa-Hansa', i.e. I am Hansa, or that I have understood what is the Hansa and have realised my true form as being a divine Hansa, he is speaking the truth.

Symbolically, Saraswati resides in his Pran because it rides on the Swan, i.e. in his heart, throat and mind—that is, his heart has purity of emotions, he speaks well of all, and his wise words are sought after by all as priceless gems of wisdom, and his mind is intelligent, discerning and noble.

A wise man is expected to pick up the truth and leave aside the non-truths from the basket full of worldly charms of astounding proportions and myriad forms of temptations present in this creation.

Those wise men who have developed the level of wisdom, erudition and sagacity that they can discriminate between what is good and what is not, what is true and what is false, what is liberating and what is ensnaring for their soul are also honoured by the epithet of being a 'Hansa' (Swan) because they are just like the Swan which has the legendary ability to pick up pearls from an assortment of gems, and drink milk leaving behind water and other adulterants in it. Even amongst such wise and enlightened men, those who have realised the 'truth' about their own self in the real sense, i.e. have become 'self-realised' and hence 'Brahm-realised' truthfully, and have consequentially attained the highest level of enlightenment and wisdom are called 'Param Hansa'—literally meaning those who have accessed the 'supreme type of enlightenment'. The grand and auspicious virtues and characteristics of such an exalted Sanyasi who is self and Brahm realised has been described in detail in the Param Hansa Parivrajak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition.

This Atma is wise and enlightened; it is holy and pure; it is divine and sublime. It is likened to the bird Swan because this bird is regarded as a metaphor for these grand virtues. Again, just like the Swan that floats majestically and with dignity on the surface of the water of a lake, remaining unaffected by the impurities present in the water, the Atma too lives in a body with the same attitude and dignity. A wise man understands that he bears the cosmic Consciousness in his inner-self as the Atma which is as immaculate and dignified as the Swan floating on the surface of a lake.

There is another reason why the metaphor of the Swan is used for a wise man who is lost in deep meditation on the 'self' and the 'truth'. The neck of the Swan is curved inwards like the alphabet U with its beak lying almost parallel to its abdomen as it floats calmly on the surface of the water. For a casual observer this posture reminds him of a person who is lost in some deep thoughts. Hence, when ancient sages and seers were searching for an instance to illustrate the state of existence of a man lost in deep meditation and contemplation they hit upon the metaphor of the Swan as being the most appropriate one.

The alphabet 'Ha' of the word 'Hansa' is sounded by the vibration of the exhaled wind passing through the vocal cords present in the throat or the wind pipe which connects to the nose, while the alphabet 'Sa' is sounded by the root of the tongue which opens into the mouth when the breath is inhaled. Both the nose and the mouth open in the same cavity called the throat. Hence, the inter relationship between 'Ha' and 'Sa' is evident. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is like the divine Swan, but he was unaware of his own divinity and sublimity, his exalted and noble stature, till that was pointed out to him. So he must become one like a 'Swan', remind himself constantly that he is like a Swan, and he must not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise Swan.

During the twenty-four hour period covering a single day and night, a person inhales and exhales, or breathes, roughly twenty-one thousand times, because each cycle of inhalation and exhalation is equivalent to saying one Mantra 'Hansa' consisting of the two syllables 'Ha and Sa' (refer Dhyānbindu Upanishad, verse no. 63).

The Hansa, a symbolic divine Swan, is also one of the twenty-four incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Vishnu had once appeared as a divine Swan to preach the four celestial sages Sankaadi who were the mental sons of the creator Brahma.

Once it so happened that Sankaadi approached Brahma and wanted to know how can someone, who wished to have Moksha (final liberation and deliverance from this material world; freedom from attachment to the sense objects of this world; emancipation and salvation), effectively control his mind and sub-conscious and divert them away from the material charms of the world and its sense objects, and towards the inner self where the Atma, the pure consciousness, resides?

Brahma was confused and did not have the answer. So they meditated upon Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, from whom Brahma was born. Thus Vishnu appeared as a divine Swan. The sages could not recognise the Lord in that form and asked who he was. Then Vishnu, in his form as a Swan, preached the great tenets of metaphysics and Vedanta to Sankaadi. Thus, this revelation of Vishnu as a Swan was an embodiment of the greatest and the most refined form of spiritual knowledge, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment. Henceforth, Swan came to be known as a synonym for these eclectic and divine virtues. This story appears in Srimad Bhagwat, 11/13.

The Swan (the Hansa) is depicted as a vehicle of Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge and wisdom. In other words, those who worship Swan ride on the crest of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment.

The concept of the 'Hansa' has been elaborately dealt with in the Pashupat Brahm Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 12-15, 19-21, 23-26, and in Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2. This Upanishad clearly stresses that 'Hansa' is a term employed to refer to the Atma as well as Brahm. While the Atma is the pure consciousness that is the 'true self' of the individual creature, Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness represented by the Mantra 'OM' or 'Pranav'. The Hansa Mantra is the 'Sutra' or thread that links the Atma to Brahm.

It is from this Hansa (or Brahm) that the entire creation with its different components, including its ninety-six Tattwas, the Trinity Gods etc., have come into being—refer: Purva Kand/Canto 1, verse no. 14-15 of Pashupat Brahm Upanishad. By due diligence and constant practice, an ascetic or the spiritual seeker can establish a seamless uniformity between the Atma and the Hansa (Brahm)—refer: Uttar Kand/Canto 2, verse no. 2 of Pashupat Brahm Upanishad.

A Hansa is employed to depict the posture adopted by a self-realised and enlightened person, such as a great sage, an ascetic or a hermit, who has understood the teaching of the Upanishads and sits in a contemplative posture, with his eyes closed, head bent forward, and the chin almost touching either the Adam's Apple or the upper part of the breastbone, constantly meditating upon the 'true self', known as the Atma, which is 'pure consciousness' and the truthful identity of all living beings. This Atma is a microcosmic form of the Parmatma, the supreme Atma representing the cosmic Consciousness that is known by the name of 'Brahm' in the Upanishads. Since this bodily posture of the highly enlightened and self-realised soul—contemplating upon the Truth and meditating upon the Self, with his eyes closed, head bent forward, and the chin almost touching either the Adam's Apple or the upper part of the breastbone—resembles how a Swan with its bent neck and its beak almost touching its breast as it floats peacefully and contentedly on calm waters, the metaphor of the 'Hansa' or a Swan is employed to explain his state of mind as well as the eclectic spiritual and metaphysical concepts that are the Absolute Truths of creation.

There are a number of Upanishads in which this concept of the divine Hansa or Swan is used extensively to explain the relationship between the Atma of the individual creature and the Parmatma, or the supreme Atma, which is the Supreme Being of this creation. Therefore, only a self-realised, highly wise and enlightened person is entitled to use the Mantra (spiritual formula) based on the word 'Hansa', and it is only he who is honest when he proclaims that he is a 'Hansa'.

This Book is a comprehensive compilation of all the original verses of the different Upanishads that are relevant to our theme, along with their Roman Transliteration and extensive / exhaustive commentary on each of them in English. The list of such Upanishads and their verses are as follows—

(a) Shukla Yajur Veda—

(i) Hansa Upanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hansa;

(ii) Param Hansa Upanishad deals with the internal feelings, the characteristic features, the signs and norms of life followed by an enlightened person who has understood the true meaning of the term Hansa as applicable to his true identity, which is his Atma and not his gross physical body.

(b) Krishna Yajur Veda—

(i) Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6; Canto 3, verse no. 18; Canto 6, verse no. 15;

(ii) Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4;

(iii) Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 59-65;

(iv) Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16-28, 34, 60-65, 78-110;

- (v) Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-137, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 35-36, 52-54;
- (vi) Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 98-102;
- (vii) Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 52, 54-55.

(c) Sam Veda—

- (i) Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 31-35, 82-83, 93.

(d) Atharva Veda—

- (i) Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4;
- (ii) Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 12-21, 23-26, and in Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3;
- (iii) Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 6;
- (iv) Hayagriva Upanishad, verse nos. 10-11;
- (v) Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse no. 3.

Besides the Upanishads, the great Indian saint-poet Goswami Tulsidas has also referred to the eclectic concept of 'Hansa' in his book of verses of pristine wisdom that is known as 'Dohawali' in its verse nos. 122 and 369, and in his magnum opus known as the epic 'Ram Charit Manas' describing the grand legendary story of Lord Ram in its Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 285.

The three Appendices added at the end of this Book explain succinctly in a simple language the many esoteric concepts appearing in the discussions in the main text of the different Upanishads quoted in our Book, to make the knowledge thus expounded and espoused therein complete and comprehensive as far as possible. These three appendices are the following: (i) The Chakras and Naadis in the body, (ii) The different States of Existence of Consciousness, and (iii) The concept of Mantra and Japa.

That said, now we will read the verses of the Upanishads as well as of the two books of Tulsidas referred to herein above to learn what these great Indian spiritual and metaphysical texts have to say on this esoteric concept of the "Hansa".

Shukla Yajur Veda's Hansa Upanishad is entirely dedicated to this esoteric and eclectic theme of 'Hansa', while the Param Hansa Upanishad enlightens us about the feelings and the way of life of a person who has truly understood the import and the meaning of the concept of a 'Hansa'. We shall read these two Upanishads in our present Book.

Besides it, we shall also be reading relevant verses of other Upanishads as listed herein above to get acquainted with the concept of a divine 'Hansa' as visualized and enunciated in the different Upanishads.

I offer this humble effort of mine at the holy feet of my beloved Lord Ram, the soul of my being and the Lord who has been the actual Author of all the books I have written, I being merely an obedient pen that does no more than merely putting the words dictated by the author on paper, and to Lord Hanuman, the greatest devotee of Lord Ram, before whom I reverentially bow my head.

Though my own knowledge and understanding are very limited and grossly meager, but as I have said above that the real Author is Lord Ram himself, I being a mere instrument in his divine hands, so I hope my esteemed readers would excuse me for any errors of omission or commission that I may be making during the rendering, and instead focus their attention to learn many new things from this Book pertaining to the concept of Hansa as defined in the Upanishads.

I owe my thanks to Sri Somil Bharti ji, B.Tech (IIT, Kanpur) and MBA (IIM, Calcutta) for his help in making available to me the Sanskrit texts of the Upanishads quoted in this Book along with their Roman Transliteration. God bless him.

Amen!

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia.

Date—29th January, 2021

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The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads

The symbolism of a Grand Swan used to explain the wisdom of spiritual and metaphysical principles by the Upanishads.

Chapter 1

In this Chapter we shall study the following two Upanishads of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition that deal with the eclectic concept of the 'Hansa' from two different perspectives: (i) The Hansa Upanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hansa; (ii) The Param Hansa Upanishad describes the inner feeling as well as the external signs and way of life of an ascetic who has fully understood the truthful meaning of the word 'Hansa' as applied to his pure self that is nothing but pure consciousness and his truthful identity.

There are two sections as follows:-

Section 1.1: The Hansa Upanishad.

Section 1.2: The Param Hansa Upanishad.

Section 1.1

The Hansa Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda

This Upanishad is a dialogue between sages Gautam and Sanatkumar. It has only 21 verses. Sage Gautam asks Sanatkumar about 'Brahm Vidya', or that essential and eclectic knowledge that pertains to the truthful, eternal, supreme and transcendental authority in creation known as Brahm. On some earlier occasion this was explained by Lord Shiva to his divine consort Parvati. The Lord has emphasised that this is a very secret knowledge having a profound spiritual reach, and it should be taught or preached only to those who are blessed with the virtues of being mentally steady and intelligent, having total restraint over their sense organs, and are faithful and devoted to their Guru, or a moral preceptor and spiritual guide.

This Upanishad highlights the fact that the Atma or soul is like a divine Swan—a bird considered as a metaphor for purity, cleanliness, divinity, wisdom and enlightenment and from which this Upanishad derives its name—residing subtly in the heart of all the living beings much like fire that is inherently present in wood, and oil is in the sesame seed. To access that Brahm, the sage prescribes the path of Yoga called 'piercing of the so-called six Chakras', which means activating these subtle energy centers in the body. That supreme entity (Atma) resides in the heart which is said to be like an eight petal lotus, and that entity itself is like a pure crystal. The cosmic primordial and primary sound called Naad can be witnessed or heard by concentrating upon this entity through the means of Yoga. It is said that at the peak of

this process one is able to witness the supreme transcendental Brahm. This state is akin to the trance-like state called Samadhi which is the successful culmination of meditation. The Vedas also assert that pure conscious, transcendental, enlightened, eternal, infinite, immaculate, almighty, holy, divine, self-illuminated, omnipresent, omniscient, blissful, calm and peaceful Brahm shines through during this state of consciousness.

The ‘Hansa Upanishad’ belongs to the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, and is the 4th Upanishad of this Veda. Since it is exclusively dedicated to the concept of ‘Hansa’ used as a metaphor for great philosophical wisdom and principles of spiritualism and metaphysics as envisioned in the Upanishads and other ancient scriptures, therefore this Upanishad has been quoted in its entirety in this Chapter as follows:-

हंसोपनिषत्

गौतम उवाच ।

भगवन्सर्वधर्मज्ञ सर्वशास्त्रविशारद ।

ब्रह्मविद्याप्रबोधो हि केनोपायेन जायते ॥ १॥

haṁsōpaniṣat

gautama uvāca ।

bhagavansarvadharmajña sarvaśāstraviśārada ।

brahmavidyāprabōdhō hi kēnōpāyēna jāyatē ॥ 1॥

1. Sage Gautam approached sage Sanatkumar and asked, ‘Oh Lord! You are an expert in all types of tenets of Dharma (righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, nobility of thoughts and conduct) and well versed in all the scriptures. Please be kind to elucidate to me the path or method by which Brahm Vidya (the truthful and holistic knowledge pertaining to the supreme transcendental authority of creation known as Brahm) can be acquired or learnt or known by me’ (1).

सनत्कुमार उवाच ।

विचार्य सर्ववेदेषु मतं ज्ञात्वा पिनाकिनः ।

पार्वत्या कथितं तत्त्वं शृणु गौतम तन्मम ॥ २॥

sanatkumāra uvāca ।

vicārya sarvavēdēṣu mataṁ jñātvā pinākinaḥ ।

pārvatya kathitaṁ tattvaṁ śṛṇu gautama tanmama ॥ 2॥

2. Sage Sanatkumar replied, ‘Oh Gautam! Listen attentively from me about the conclusion that Lord Shiva arrived at after deeply contemplating upon and debating threadbare all the body of auspicious knowledge pertaining to Dharma that exist in all the different scriptures, and he had described (preached, divulged) what he concluded to his divine consort Parvati (2).

अनाख्येयमिदं गुह्यं योगिनां कोशसंनिभम् ।
हंसस्याकृतिविस्तारं भुक्तिमुक्तिफलपूदम् ॥ ३॥

anākhyēyamidaṁ guhyaṁ yōgināṁ kōśasaṁnibham ।
haṁsasyākṛtivistāraṁ bhuktimuktiphalaṣṭadam ॥ 3॥

3. This subtle, sublime and esoteric knowledge should not be divulged to an unauthorized, unworthy and incompetent person (such as a stranger, a heretic, insincere people, an illiterate fool, those who are skeptics etc.). For Yogis (ascetics and those who follow the path of meditation for self-realisation and Brahm-realisation), this profound knowledge is like a treasury. The knowledge that describes the divine form and eclectic location of the holy entity (i.e. the pure conscious Atma which in turn is a manifestation of the supreme Brahm) which is like a Swan is a provider of peace and tranquility as well as emancipation and salvation (3).

अथ हंसपरमहंसनिर्णयं व्याख्यास्यामः ।
ब्रह्मचारिणे शान्ताय दान्ताय गुरुभक्ताय । हंसहंसेति सदा ध्यायन् ॥ ४ ॥

atha haṁsaparamahaṁsanirṇayaṁ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ ।
brahmacāriṇē śāntāya dāntāya gurubhaktāya ।
haṁsahaṁsēti sadā dhyāyan ॥ 4 ॥

4. [This verse tells us about the eligibility criterion for being worthy of hearing and learning this Upanishad and the spiritual knowledge it contains.] The great secret of this knowledge that pertains to the divine and pure self which is the Atma of the individual conceptualized as a Swan, and by extension to the supreme transcendental cosmic Self of creation which is known as Brahm conceptualized as the Param-Hansa (literally the great Swan), should be divulged or preached to only worthy and eligible people such as those who are Brahmacharis (i.e. those who observe self restraint over themselves in all matters, and follow the principles of austerity and penance in their lives), those who are of a steady, firmly grounded, calm and tranquil demeanor, those who maintain control over their sense organs and mind, those who are devoted and faithful to their Guru (moral preceptor and spiritual guide), and those who have become self-realised and enlightened about the divine nature of their pure self as being equivalent to the bird Swan by remaining engrossed in contemplation on the fundamental nature of their Atma based upon the teachings of the scriptures (4).

[Note—The enlightened and realised person thinks of himself as a *Swan* and feels exhilarated that he is not an ordinary man bogged down by worldly fetters, but an exalted soul that is like a Swan.

The bird Swan or Hansa is considered the most pure, clean, wise, erudite and clever among the birds. It is said to eat pearls, which means it picks up and accepts only the best amid the variety of things available to it in the form of an assortment of various gems and jewels representing the dazzling charms of this world. It is also reputed to drink milk leaving aside the water content in it symbolising its ability to imbibe the essence and the best, and leave the rest aside. It is also the vehicle of Goddess Saraswati, the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, speech and learning, indicating that it bears these glorious virtues. Hence, the reference to a swan while describing a creature conscious of the vital wind or Pran passing through him means the basic, inherent and intrinsic tendency of that wisened and intelligent creature is to be the best, most pure and divine, wise, awakened and enlightened, adroit, clever and sagacious like the swan, and pick all the goodness and forsake all that is bad in this world. Saraswati rides on a swan, symbolising the creature's inborn enlightenment and excellence of his mental caliber. Symbolically, Saraswati resides in his Pran because it rides on the swan, i.e. in his heart, throat and mind—that is, his heart has purity of emotions, he speaks well of all, and his wise words are sought after by all as priceless gems of wisdom, and his mind is intelligent, discerning and noble.

The alphabet 'Ha' of the word 'Hansa' is sounded by the vibration of the exhaled wind passing through the vocal cords present in the throat or the wind pipe which connects to the nose, while the alphabet 'Sa' is sounded by the root of the tongue which opens into the mouth when the breath is inhaled. Both the nose and the mouth open in the same cavity called the throat. Hence, the inter relationship between 'Ha' and 'Sa' is evident. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is like the divine swan, but he was unaware of his own divinity and sublimity, his exalted and noble stature, till that was pointed out to him in this verse. So he must become one like a 'swan', remind himself constantly that he is like a swan, and he must not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan.

During the twenty-four hour period covering a single day and night, a person inhales and exhales, or breathes, roughly twenty-one thousand times, because each cycle of inhalation and exhalation is equivalent to saying one Mantra 'Hansa' consisting of the two syllables 'Ha and Sa'. This concept has been expounded upon in Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 24, 62-63; and Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 82-83.]

सर्वेषु देहेषु व्याप्य वर्तते । यथा ह्यग्निः काष्ठेषु तिलेषु तैलमिव तं विदित्वा मृत्युमत्येति ॥ 5 ॥

sarvēṣu dēhēṣu vyāpya vartatē । yathā hyagniḥ kāṣṭhēṣu tilēṣu tailamiva
taṁ viditvā mr̥tyumatyēti ॥ 5 ॥

5. Even as fire is inherently and uniformly present in wood and oil is in the sesame seed, this Atma, which is treated as being equivalent to a Swan, is subtly and imperceptibly present universally in the bodies of all the living creatures of this creation. This all-inclusive knowledge and holistic approach to the world and its inhabitants makes a creature free from the fears of death (5).

[Note—A man fears death because he thinks that once he dies he would lose all the accumulated glories and worldly assets that he had acquired and accumulated by such hard labour over the years in his fruitful life. He has not been able to enjoy them to his satisfaction when he has to die. But this holistic view about the truthful nature of the ‘self’ who would have enjoyed these fruits of his hard labour creates in him a sense of fulfillment because if the fruits of his labour is enjoyed by others in the society then it is deemed that he has enjoyed them himself. This is because the Atma which is his ‘true self’ lives in all the creatures, and therefore though he leaves the present body, he still can derive comfort from the idea that he would enjoy them in some other form. This leads to selfless doing of deeds and the man becomes broad in his vision; he does not cringe for his possessions and treats them as belonging to the society. The word ‘society’ should be treated in the all-inclusive and holistic view of the Upanishads as indicating the entire gamut of creation, and not restricted to any particular group of people or geographical area.

There is another hidden idea here. When a man is enlightened enough to understand what is being said here about his true self as being the pure conscious Atma with all its characteristic attributes which makes it equivalent to the supreme transcendental Being in creation, then the very notion of ‘death’ becomes irrelevant as that Atma never dies because it is eternal, infinite and without a birth and end. Further, he realises that his body is not his true self, rather it is only a temporary habitat for his self, and he has received it as a result of his past deeds and their consequences. This body is well known to be perishable, while the Atma is imperishable. So there is no relation between them except that of a dwelling and the dweller respectively. Therefore, leaving the body does not mean ‘death’, and this realisation dispels all fears of the latter.]

गुदमवष्टभ्याधाराद्वायुमुत्थाप्यस्वाधिष्ठां त्रिः
प्रदक्षिणीकृत्य मणिपूरकं च गत्वा अनाहतमतिक्रम्य
विशुद्धौ प्राणान्निरुध्याज्ञामनुध्यायन्ब्रह्मरन्ध्रं ध्यायन्
त्रिमात्रोऽहमित्येवं सर्वदा ध्यायन् ॥ 6 ॥

gudamavaṣṭabhyādhārādvāyumuṭthāpyasvādhiṣṭhāṁ triḥ
pradikṣiṇīkṛtya maṇipūrakam ca gatvā anāhatamatikramya

viśuddhau prāṇānnirudhyājñāmanudhyāyanbrahmarandhram dhyāyan
trimātrō'hamityēvaṁ sarvadā dhyāyan । ॥ 6॥

6. [The way to acquire knowledge pertaining to this metaphoric Hansa or Swan is being described now.] To begin with, the aspirant ascetic should pull up the vital wind (i.e. the Apaana Vayu) from the anus and let it pass upwards from and through the Muladhara Chakra. The wind should then be allowed to swirl around the Swadhisthana Chakra three times, go up into the Manipura Chakra, and then encroach (spread) over the Anahata Chakra.

As a next step, the Pran (the vital wind known as breath) should be held (localized) in the Vishudha Chakra, and the aspirant should contemplate upon the Agnya Chakra followed by the Brahma Randhra Chakra.

While lifting the Apaana wind from the lower end (i.e. from the region of the anus as described above) and concentrating (localizing) the Pran wind at the top (again as described above), the aspirant should be firmly focused on the concept that he is the Trinity Gods¹ personified.

A realised and accomplished ascetic perpetually observes that formless Brahma everywhere, and true to his ideals, he too becomes one like it (i.e. he attains the fourth state of consciousness called Turiya which is obtained during the culmination of Samadhi and is the nearest state which is analogous to Brahma) (6).

[Note--¹These *Trinity Gods* consist of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder. They also signify the entire gamut of creation—right from its beginning to its conclusion. Besides this, Brahma is treated as the wisest in the creation because he produced the Vedas which are repositories of all knowledge that exist in creation, Vishnu symbolises the Viraat Purush who incorporates the entire creation in himself, and Shiva is a treasure of renunciation and asceticism.

There is another connotation of this word *trinity* from the metaphysical point of view. According to the Pranava-panishad, the Atma has three Matras or conceptual aspects. These are indicated by the three letters of the divine Mantra OM, viz. A, U and M. This word is a symbol of Brahma and by extension of the Atma. The first letter 'A' stands for the initiation of creation, the second letter 'U' stands for the extension and rolling forward of the creation, while the last and third letter 'M' stands for conclusion. Interestingly, the Sanskrit word for death is 'Mritu' which starts with 'M'. A separate appendix of this volume gives a comprehensive idea of this concept of OM.

²The *Chakras* are the various swirling, subtle energy centers in the body. Appendix no. 1 at the end of this Book explains the concept of Chakras in detail.]

एकोऽसौ परमहंसो भानुकोटिप्रीकाशः येनेदं सर्वं व्याप्तम् ॥ ७ ॥

ēṣō'sau paramahamsō bhānukōṭipratīkāśaḥ yēnēdaṁ sarvaṁ vyāptam ॥

7 ॥

7. That ‘Paramhans’ (literally the supreme and exalted Swan; here referring to Brahm personified as Atma) is splendid, radiant and brilliant with a light equivalent to uncountable number of Suns. The entire world is illuminated with its bright light (7).

[Note—The Sun’s brightness lights up the world and no life can survive without it. The Atma is the only conscious factor present in the dark realm of the gross body. If there was no Atma, if there was no consciousness present in a creature, then the body would be as lifeless as the world without the Sun. The Sun is the only ‘self illuminated’ entity in the sky; the rest of the planets shine only by its reflected light. Not even the brilliant looking Moon would show up in its glory had it not been for the Sun. That is why the Sun is treated as a visible symbol of Brahm. There is another reason for this choice—no one can practically ‘see’ the Sun with naked eyes if he does not want to voluntarily become blind by its dazzle, though its presence in the sky is beyond doubt and its existence cannot be denied just because we cannot ‘see’ it! Similarly, Brahm *is* indeed there, though we cannot ‘see’ it directly, but at the most can use indirect methods of logic to do so.]

तस्याष्टधा वृत्तिर्भवति । पूर्वदले पुण्ये मतिः । आग्नेये निद्रालस्यादयो भवन्ति । याम्ये क्रूरे
मतिः । नैर्ते पापे मनीषा । वारुण्यां क्रीडा । वायव्ये गमनादौ बुद्धिः । सौम्ये रतिप्रीतिः ।
ईशाने द्रव्यादानं । मध्ये वैराग्यं । केसरे जाग्रदवस्था । कर्णिकायां स्वप्नं । लिङ्गे सुषुप्तिः ।
पद्मत्यागे तुरीयं । यदा हंसो नादे लीनो भवति तदा तुर्यातीतम् ॥ ८ ॥

tasyāṣṭadhā vṛttirbhavati । pūrvadalē puṇyē matiḥ । āgnēyē
nidrālasyaḍayō bhavanti । yāmyē krūrē matiḥ । nairṛtē pāpē manīṣā ।
vāruṇyām krīḍā । vāyavyē gamanādaū buddhiḥ । saumyē ratiprītiḥ ।
īśānē dravyādānaṁ । madhyē vairāgyaṁ । kēsarē jāgradavasthā ।
karṇikāyām svapnaṁ । liṅgē suṣuptiḥ । padmatyāgē turīyaṁ । yadā haṁsō
nādē līnō bhavati tadā turyātītam ॥ ८ ॥

8. That pure and enlightened conscious entity known as the Hansa (i.e. the Swan-like Atma of the individual creature) has eight types of ‘Vrittis’ (inborn and inherent tendencies, temperaments and habits that determine its character and behavioural patterns). These eight Vrittis reveal themselves, or are conceptualized in the form of eight petals of the symbolic lotus that represents the heart where this entity is seated. These petals are spread uniformly in all the directions, one petal indicating one Vritti, and indicate the various ways in which these Vrittis affect the Swan-like Atma as well as the fact that these are like the tentacles or arms of the Atma by which it interacts with and accepts the world at large. The petal of this lotus facing towards the east represents the righteous and noble inclinations; the petal facing south-east corner (Agneya) represents sleep, indolence, drowsiness, lethargy, inertia and disinclination to work; the petal facing towards the south direction represents cruel tendencies; the petal facing the south-west angle (Nairitya) represents the inclination of the mind to be sinful, unrighteous and pervert; the petal facing towards the west represents the desires and the intellectual ability for sports, action and play; that petal facing the

north-west direction (Vayabya) represents the desire and the ability to be on the move, to go, roam and wander; the petal in the north direction represents the affections of a creature for things that are graceful, gentle, beautiful, attractive, pleasant and charming; the petal in the north-east direction (Ishan) represents the desires for making charity; and the inner layer of petals surrounding the thalamus represent the tendency to renounce, to be dispassionate and detached from the artificial, deluding and sensual world of material objects.

The tendrils of this lotus represent the waking state of consciousness, the stalk represents the dream state of conscious, and the thalamus represents the deep sleep state of consciousness. When a creature represented by the divine Swan flies off from this lotus-like abode in the body (i.e. it abandons the symbolic habitat or dwelling in the 8-petal lotus represented by his heart and rises above its limiting aspects just like a householder snapping all his relationships with his home and taking to the path of Vanprastha), it obtains the fourth state of consciousness called the 'Turiya state'. Eventually, when the creature in the form of his subtle Atma called the Swan, rises high up in the sky representing its spiritual elevation, it virtually gets lost in the depths of the cosmos (sky) and loses its link with its earlier habitat in the heart of the mortal body of the creature. This state is akin to the ascetic getting drowned in the constant stream of the reverberating cosmic sound called 'Naad' that he hears during the successful culmination of his meditative practices. This is called the post Turiya state, or the 'Turiyatit' state (8).

[Note—The various states of existence and relevant matters are explained in Appendix no. 2 at the end of this Book.]

अथो नादमाधाराद्ब्रह्मरन्ध्रपर्यन्तं शुद्धस्फटिकसङ्काशं स वै ब्रह्म परमात्मेत्युच्यते ॥ 9 ॥

athō nādamādhārādbrahmarandhraparyantam
śuddhasphaṭikasāṅkāśam sa vai brahma paramātmētyucyatē ॥ 9॥

9. In this way, the vibrations created by the activated vital winds, right from the Muladhar Chakra to the Brahm Randhra Chakra, produce a subtle sound resembling the cosmic Naad which reverberates throughout the body of the aspirant. The divine crystal or quartz, which is pure and pristine, creates this cosmic vibration, and this crystal is known as Brahm; it is a metaphor for the esoteric supreme Spirit that is endowed with the magical and mystical powers to resonate own its own and create this vibration known as Naad! (9).

[Note—The quartz crystal is a transparent colourless form of quartz that comes naturally, or can also be manufactured. It is used in optics and electronics. Its atoms produce electrical impulses by their vibrations.]

अथ हंस ऋषिः । अव्यक्ता गायत्री छन्दः । परमहंसो देवता । अहमिति बीजम् । स इति शक्तिः ।
सोऽहमिति कीलकम् ॥ 10 ॥

atha haṁsa ṛṣiḥ | avyaktā gāyatrī chandaḥ | paramahaṁsō dēvatā |
 ahamiti bījam | sa iti śaktiḥ | sō'hamiti kīlakam || 10 ||

10. When the ascetic thus becomes submerged in the reverberating subtle sound emanating from the divine 'quartz crystal' (the immaculate pure conscious Atma) located in his heart as well as the activated vital winds as described earlier, he is deemed to be doing constant 'Japa' (repetition of some divine Mantras which are mystical words having magical spiritual powers), albeit in a subtle and silent mode.

[This is because he does not purposely select any word, even the cosmic word OM, for the purpose of meditation, but the sound which he hears in his mind is the Naad which is crystallised or encrypted in the form of the word OM. His mind is drowned in this sound, and the numbing and sedative effect is similar to the one obtained by doing constant Japa using a continuous stream of certain words. The sound energy in the cosmic ether is harnessed by Japa, and it is utilized here to activate the symbolic quartz crystal, called the Atma, residing in the heart. This results in the latter's vibrations which translate into spiritual awakening, and obtaining the state of ecstasy and bliss.]

This involuntarily produced sound is a subtle and natural vibration that pervades in all the nerves of the body of the ascetic who hears it. This natural Japa is similar to the practice of consciously and physically repeating Mantras during meditation exercises to concentrate and focus the mind.

Now, every Mantra has six components, and with reference to this silent and involuntarily done Japa, they are the following—(a) the Rishi (the presiding sage or the chief priest who had first conceived the given Mantra and is honoured for it by being invoked in the beginning of the use of this Mantra; he is also the one who presides over its use) is the 'Hansa' or the divine Swan representing the Atma of the creature; (b) the Gyatri Chanda (a special type of poetic composition used to compose sacred hymns in the Vedas) is the 'Avyakta', i.e. the indescribable feeling of ecstasy and bliss that accompanies self realisation; (c) the Devta (the patron deity for whom the Mantras are meant) is the Paramhans (the supreme Hansa, i.e. the supreme Atma or Brahm); (d) the Beej of this Mantra (or the seed of the Mantra; the root sound of the particular Mantra; the cryptic letters or syllables that are used during occult practices to replace the full Mantra pertaining to a particular God or deity) is 'Hṁ' (pronounced as "Hum"; (e) the Shakti (esoteric mystical divine powers incorporated in any Mantra) of this Mantra is 'Sa'; and finally (f) the Kilak¹ (the peg or nail to which the powers are pegged or nailed) of this Mantra is 'So-a-ham', i.e. 'that is me' (10).

[Note--¹This *Kilak* signifies the fact that this 'Mantra', i.e. the essence of the knowledge contained in the Upanishad, helps the aspirant to remain fixed and steadfast in his beliefs and convictions that he is no one else but Divinity personified, the supreme transcendental Truth personified, Brahm personified. This realisation fills him with wholesome ecstasy, bliss and peace, and gives rest to all his restlessness and perplexities. This spiritual achievement is equivalent to obtaining liberation from the fetters of ignorance and delusions that are the hallmarks of this world, and it delivers him from the vortex of sufferings and pains of remaining trapped in the net of ignorance and delusions. The aspirant realises who his true self is, which is treated in this Upanishad as a divine Swan residing in the lotus like heart of the creature.

This Swan represents Brahm in the form of the Atma of the creature. And this Atma is pure consciousness represented by the activated, vibrating quartz crystal.]

षट् सङ्ख्यया अहोरात्रयोरैकविंशतिसहस्राणि षट् शतान्यधिकानि भवन्ति ॥ 11 ॥
 सूर्याय सोमाय निरञ्जनाय निराभासाय तनु सूक्ष्मं प्रचोदयादिति ।
 अग्नीषोमाभ्यां वौषट् हृदयाद्यङ्गन्यासकरन्यासौ भवतः ॥ 12 ॥
 एवं कृत्वा हृदये अष्टदले हंसात्मानं ध्यायेत् ॥ 13 ॥

ṣaṭ saṅkhyayā ahōrātrayōrēkaviṁśatisahasrāṇi ṣaṭ śatānyadhikāni
 bhavanti ॥ 11 ॥
 sūryāya sōmāya nirañjanāya nirābhāsāya tanu sūkṣmaṁ pracōdayāditi ।
 agniṣōmābhyāṁ vauṣaṭ hṛdayādyaṅganyāsakaranyāsau bhavataḥ ॥ 12 ॥
 ēvaṁ kṛtvā hṛdayēaṣṭadalē haṁsātmānaṁ dhyāyēt ॥ 13 ॥

11-13. These six subtle divisions of the Mantras are symbolically repeated when one takes twenty one thousand six hundred breaths during the course of a day consisting of twenty four hours called ‘Ahoratra’.

While meditating, the ascetic should pronounce the following Mantra while ritualistically purifying the heart and other parts of the body with his hands—
 ‘Suryaaye Somaaye Niranjanaaye Niraabhaasaaye Atanu Sukshma Prachodayaaditi Agnishomaabhyam Vaushat’.

[The essential meaning of this Mantra is that the divine Atma present in the heart is as splendorous as the sun, as glorious as the moon, is without any faults and blemishes, is pure, holy and divine, is invisible and without any form, is most subtle, miniscule and microscopic, and is endowed with the effervescent energy present in the fire element.]

After this symbolic purification rite, one should visualise that the divine Hansa or Swan (i.e. the Atma) is established in the heart which is like a lotus having eight petals (11-13).

अग्नीषोमौ पक्षावोङ्कारः शिरो बिन्दुस्तु नेत्रं मुखं रुद्रो रुद्राणी चरणौ ।
 द्विविधं कण्ठतः कुर्यादित्युन्मनाः जपोपसंहारमित्यभिधीयते ॥ 14 ॥

agniṣōmau pakṣāvōṅkāraḥ śira ukārō bindu strinētraṁ mukhaṁ rudrō
 rudrāṇī caraṇau ।
 dvividhaṁ kaṇthataḥ kuryādityunmanāḥ
 ajapōpasamhāramityabhidhīyatē ॥ 14 ॥

14. The ‘fire’ (symbolising the sun) and the ‘moon’ represent the two wings of this divine Swan; the eclectic divine word ‘OM’ is its head; the geometrical symbol of this word OM is the Sanskrit word ‘Ū’ with a dot at the top (i.e. ॐ: i.e. as “Om̐”, or Aum, and it represents its third eye of wisdom and enlightenment; its mouth is Rudra (one of the ferocious forms of Lord Shiva, the annihilator of creation); its two feet are represented by Rudrani (the divine consort of Rudra). This symbolic form of divinity has two forms—viz. one that is visible and the other that is not visible representing the creature and the Atma respectively. Just like the Swan makes its presence felt by making a sound in its throat, the aspirant ascetic should also hear the Naad in the form of the sound of breath passing through his throat during his meditative trance and realise the presence of the divine Swan representing the supreme Brahm in the form of his Atma residing in his bosom.

The constant reverberation of the Naad makes him like a man in trance who remains unconcerned with and oblivious of the world of sense objects around him. This state results in the de-facto conclusion or elimination of the world without doing any specific Japa of Mantras to achieve this objective.

[That is, if the ascetic has developed enough expertise to remain perpetually engrossed in hearing the subtle sound of the Naad reverberating ceaselessly in his mind and nerves, he feels sedated and tranquilized. The same effect is produced by regular practice of Yoga wherein the practitioner repeats a particular word as designated Mantra prescribed to focus the mind and prevent it from being restless. See also verse no. 10.] (14).

एवं सर्वं हंसवशात्तस्मान्मनो हंसो विचार्यते ॥ 15 ॥

ēvaṁ sarvaṁ haṁsavaśāttasmānmanō haṁsō vicāryatē ॥ 15 ॥

15. All the thoughts processes become subordinated to this symbolic divine Hansa/Swan representing the Atma. In other words, the ascetic keeps contemplating upon the Atma residing in his own body (15).

स एव जपकोट्या नादमनुभवति एवं सर्वं हंसवशान्नादो दशविधो जायते ।
 विणीति प्रथमः । चिन्विणीति द्वितीयः । घण्टानादस्तृतीयः । शङ्खनादश्चतुर्थः ।
 पञ्चमतन्त्रीनादः । षष्ठस्तालनादः । सप्तमो वेणुनादः । अष्टमो मृदङ्गनादः ।
 नवमो भेरीनादः । दशमो मेघनादः ॥ 16 ॥
 नवमं परित्यज्य दशममेवाभ्यसेत् ॥ 17 ॥

sa ēva japakōṭyā nādamanubhavati ēvaṁ sarvaṁ haṁsavaśānnādō
 daśavidhō jāyatē । ciṇīti prathamah । ciñciṇīti dvitīyah ।
 ghaṇṭānādastrīyah । śaṅkhanādaścaturthah । pañcamatantrīnādah ।

ṣaṣṭhastālanādaḥ | saptamō vēṇunādaḥ | aṣṭamō mṛdaṅganādaḥ |
 navamō bhērīnādaḥ | daśamō mēghanādaḥ || 16 ||
 navamaṁ parityajya daśamamēvābhyasēt || 17 ||

16-17. When a sincere aspirant has repeated the Mantra (So-a-ham, i.e. ‘that is me’ as described in verse no. 4) ten Koti times (i.e. 100 million times), he is able to witness (i.e. hear the reverberation of) the cosmic Naad. This cosmic resonating vibration has ten sound forms, or cosmic varieties of sound or music emanating from it— (i) clinking of bracelets, (ii) tinkling of anklets, (iii) the deep reverberation and resonating clanging sound of a gong hitting a brass bell, (iv) the sharp blowing of a conch shell, (v) the playing of stringed musical instrument (e.g., lute, harp, guitar), (vi) the clap or clonking sound of crashing cymbals, (vii) the shrill but soothing and haunting sound of a flute, (viii) the beating of tumbrels, (ix) the sound of kettle drums, and (x) the rumbling and thundering of cloud.

The spiritual seeker would hear these sounds in a progressive manner as his meditation moves ahead towards reaching its pinnacle of spiritual accomplishment. The sounds or music are first heard in a mixed cacophony, and then they begin to separate into distinct genres of sound clearly discernible by the aspirant (16).

He should endeavour to forgo the first nine forms of Naad and instead concentrate his attention on the last form, i.e. the thundering and rumbling of clouds (17).

[Note—The various subtle sounds emanating from the cosmic vibration called the Naad have been elaborately described in Naad-Bindu Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition.]

प्रथमे चिञ्चिणीगात्रं द्वितीये गात्रभञ्जनम् । तृतीये खेदनं याति चतुर्थे कम्पते शिरः ॥ 18 ॥
 पञ्चमे सूवते तालु षष्ठेऽमृतनिषेवणम् । सप्तमे गूढविज्ञानं परा वाचा तथाष्टमे ॥ 19 ॥
 अदृश्यं नवमे देहं दिव्यं चक्षुस्तथामलम् । दशमे परमं ब्रह्म भवेद्ब्रह्मात्मसंनिधौ ॥ 20 ॥

prathamē ciñciṇīgātraṁ dvitīyē gātrabhañjanam |
 tṛtīyē khēdanam yāti caturthē kampatē śiraḥ || 18 ||
 pañcamē sravatē tālu ṣaṣṭhē'mṛtaniṣēvaṇam |
 saptamē gūḍhavijñānam parā vācā tathāṣṭamē || 19 ||
 adṛśyam navamē dēham divyam cakṣustathāmalam |
 daśamē paramaṁ brahma bhavēdbrahmātmasaṁnidhau || 20 ||

18-20. As a result of the vibrations created by this Naad having ten subtle forms as described above, the body experiences different types of emotional feelings, each feeling being specific to that particular form of Naad. These feelings reveal themselves in the form of various reflexes of the body¹.

The 1st sound creates a tickling sensation. The 2nd sound creates tense or taut muscles leading to spasms. The 3rd sound leads to perspiration breaking out from the body. The 4th sound creates tremors in the head. The 5th sound creates saliva to

dribble out of the mouth. The 6th sound causes ‘a rain of Amrit’ (which is a metaphor for tears of bliss). The 7th sound bestows upon the aspirant the blessing of being acquainted with the profoundest and most secret of knowledge. The 8th sound enables the aspirant to speak in a mystical language. [That is, he can speak in any tongue, he can speak of things unknown, he can speak of the wisest of things, his speech acquires the potent and prowess of possessing divine powers].

The 9th sound enables the aspirant to make himself invisible and he acquires the so-called ‘3rd eye’ having mystical and divine powers of insight and infinite vision. Finally, when the aspirant hears the 10th sound, he acquires the transcendental and eclectic knowledge pertaining to the supreme Brahm, and as a result he experiences or witnesses the esoteric and sublime presence of the supreme Brahm first hand (18-20).

[Note--¹The reflex actions of the muscles in the body are controlled by the brain. When the nerves of the brain—which is actually an electronic circuit consisting of a fine maze of ganglions, nerve fibers and nerve endings much like an integrated circuit of a computer—are impacted by these sound waves emanating from the cosmic ‘Naad’ which tend to interfere with and modify their working much like the interference of the electronically charged particles of the solar wind with the radio transmission on earth, the impulses or electric signals which are given by the brain to other parts of the body also get effected or modified. This results in the muscles of the body reacting differently to different wavelengths or frequencies of the various sound waves emanating from the sea of sound called the ‘Naad’. Each individual reaction of the body will therefore correspond to particular frequencies or wavelength that the aspirant is hearing at that instant. As a natural corollary, it follows that by observing the reflexes of the aspirant’s body, we can determine at what spiritual level he is prevailing at that moment.]

तस्मिन्मनो विलीयते मनसि सङ्कल्पविकल्पे दग्धे पुण्यपापे
सदाशिवः शक्त्यात्मा सर्वत्रावस्थितः स्वयंज्योतिः शुद्धो
बुद्धो नित्यो निरञ्जनः शान्तः प्रकाशत इति वेदप्रवचनं वेदप्रवचनम् ॥ २१॥

tasminmanō vilīyatē manasi saṅkalpavikalpē dagdhē puṇyapāpē
sadāśivaḥ śaktyātmā sarvatrāvasthitaḥ svayaṁjyōtiḥ śuddhō
buddhō nityō nirañjanaḥ śāntaḥ prakāśata iti vēdapravacanaṁ
vēdapravacanam ॥ 21॥

21. When the mind and the heart dissolve and become one with the indescribable fathomless entity (known as Brahm) and lose their independent identity and existence, then all doubts and confusions, all perplexities and consternations that had existed till the time this did not happen, collapse into their primary source, the Mana (i.e. the emotional as well as thinking mind and the sentimental heart) of the aspirant.

[That is, once the mind and heart cease to exist, there is no scope for the man to make so many resolves, have so many desires, get involved in so many things pertaining to this mundane artificial world. In fact, this world itself ceases to exist because the existence of the world is due to the mind; it is the mind that conceives and then gives this world a shape as well as any importance at all. This is proved by the fact that when we are not interested in anything, or when we are not aware that such and such thing exists, then we are not concerned about it at all. It is only when the mind gets to know about it that it starts thinking about it and getting restless about it.]

Since the mind and heart do not exist, then all the deeds—whether they be good and auspicious, known as ‘Punya’, or bad and inauspicious, known as ‘Paap’ or sinful—cease to matter. With non-involvement in any type of deed, the typical chain of deed-consequence-new deed is disrupted, and the creature is freed from their trap.

Such an exalted and liberated ‘Hansa’ or Swan (here referring to the realised and enlightened person) then perpetually lives as a personification of the eternal Shiva (truth, bliss, auspiciousness, wisdom, enlightenment) and his Shakti (divine, mystical and eclectic powers, energy, strength and authority). He becomes so exalted in stature that he becomes synonymous with his Atma and therefore exhibits all the virtues of the latter—such as being all-pervading and omnipresent, being self-illuminated, being pure and uncorrupt, being wise, erudite and enlightened, being eternal, perpetual and infinite, being without any faults, flaws, shortcomings and blemishes, being peaceful, tranquil, serene, calm and quiet. Being endowed with these divine, holy and eclectic qualities, he shines in this world with his radiant, bright and splendorous virtue and glory. This is the assertion of the Vedas.

With this, this Upanishad comes to a conclusion (21).

Section 1.2

Param Hansa Upanishad

This Upanishad has only four Mantras or verses in which the celestial sage Narad asks Lord Vishnu about the characteristic features, signs and norms of a type of Sanyasi (renunciate ascetic, an itinerant monk, friar or hermit) known as ‘Paramhans’.

अथ योगिनं परमहंसनं कोऽयं मार्गस्तेषां का स्थितिरिति नारदो भगवन्तमुपगत्योवाच ।
तं भगवानाह । योऽयं परमहंसमार्गो लोके दुर्लभतरो न तु बाहुल्यो यद्येको भवति स एव
नित्यपूतस्थः स एव वेदपुरुष इति विदुषो मन्यन्ते महापुरुषो यच्चित्तं तत्सर्वदा
मस्येवावतिष्ठते तस्मादहं च तस्मिन्नेवावस्थीयते ।
असौ स्वपुत्रमित्रकलत्रबन्वादींश्शिखायज्ञोपवीते स्वाध्यायं च सर्वकर्माणि संन्यस्यायं ब्रह्माण्डं
च हित्वा कौपीनं दण्डमाच्छादनं च स्वशरीरोपभोगार्थाय च लोकस्योपकारार्थाय च
परिग्रहेतच्च न मुख्योऽस्ति कोऽयं मुख्य इति चेदयं मुख्यः ॥ १॥

atha yōginam paramahamsanam kō'yaṁ mārnatēṣaṁ kā sthitiriti
 nāradō bhagavantamupagatyōvāca I taṁ bhagavānāḥ I
 yō'yaṁ paramahamsamārgō lōkē durlabhatarō na tu bāhulyō yadyēkō
 bhavati sa ēva nityapūtasthaḥ sa ēva vēdapuruṣa iti viduṣō manyantē
 mahāpuruṣō yaccittam tatsarvadā mayyēvāvatīṣṭatē tasmādahaṁ ca
 tasminnēvāvasthīyatē I
 asau svaputramitrakalatrabanvvādīṁśikhāyajñōpavītē svādhyāyaṁ ca
 sarvakarmāṇi samnyasyāyaṁ brahmāṇḍam ca hitvā kaupīnam
 daṇḍamācchādanaṁ ca svaśarīrōpabhōgārthāya ca lōkasyōpakārārthāya
 ca parigrahēttacca na mukhyō'sti kō'yaṁ mukhya iti
 cēdayam mukhyaḥ II 1II

“Verse no. 1 = Once upon a time, the celestial sage Narad went to Lord Vishnu and asked him, ‘Oh Lord! Amongst renunciate ascetics, what is the condition and characteristic features of a ‘Paramhans’, and what path do they follow (i.e. what rules do they observe, whom do they worship, what is their routine life etc.)?’

Hearing this, the Lord replied, ‘The path followed by a Paramhans Sanyasi is very difficult and rare in this world. Such people who follow this path honestly and diligently are also very rare. Only a few people can become a true Paramhans Sanyasi. They remain perpetually engrossed in the most holy, pious and divine state of mental bearing. Such Paramhans Sanyasis are an embodiment of the Vedas; they represent what the Vedas preach and they exemplify their tenets in practical life—this is the belief of those who are wise, expert, erudite and well versed in this subject.

The mind and intellect of such persons are ever engrossed and focused on me (Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of the creation and the Viraat Purush who is the Lord from whom even Brahma, the creator of the visible world and the Vedas, is said to have emerged). I too am firmly established in their bosom.

A Paramhans Sanyasi forsakes all ties with his worldly relatives such as his kith and kin, his son and wife, his friends and brothers etc. He even discards his links with all such external signs of Sanyas such as keeping a tuft of hair on the top of the head (cranium), the sacred thread, the studying of the scriptures, and all other traditional formalities, observances of different sacraments and rituals that are associated with a religious way of life. He bears his life or body for the welfare of the world at large. He wears just enough clothes to sustain that body, i.e. he just covers his body to maintain decorum and to protect it from the vagaries of Nature—e.g. he wears only a loin cloth and a sheet to cover his body with. He carries only a ascetic’s staff called the ‘Danda’. [This Danda is like a scepter held by a king; it is a symbol of his spiritual kingship and distinguishes him from the rest of the people; it is his symbol of moral and spiritual authority.]

But actually and frankly speaking, even these are not the correct and truthful symbols or signs of a ‘true’ Paramhans Sanyasi.’

Surprised, Narad asked, ‘Then oh Lord, what are those signs or symbols?’ (1).

[Note—The word *Paramhans* has two parts—viz. ‘Param’ which means the best, the most exalted, the superior one, the exemplary character or the grand eclectic virtues exhibited by a person, while the second word ‘Hans’ refers to the bird Swan which is considered as the wisest amongst the birds because of

its reputation of picking the best of all available. Therefore, a Paramhans Sanyasi is one who is the best amongst all categories of renunciate ascetics or hermits. He is deemed to have graduated from being a simple renunciate into an enlightened and self-realised person for whom all formalities and formal forms of worship and signs that are used as a constant reminder for the aspirant that he belongs to a particular school of thought and philosophy, that he is supposed to adhere to his sanctioned code of conduct and behaviour, that he is supposed to diligently avoid doing anything that is not behooving of his exalted stature, that he has taken certain exemplary religious vows and he should be careful about them lest he would fall from his chosen path of spiritualism, and that the world would look up to him for an example and so he should be very careful about what he does, says and how he behaves—are not needed and not necessary. In fact he has even gone beyond any worldly yardsticks for measuring his enlightenment, mystical abilities, or of the degree of holiness, purity and sincerity as a spiritually exalted soul.]

न दण्डं न शिखं न यज्ञोपवीतं न चाच्छादनं चरति परमहंसः ।
 न शितं न चोष्णं न सुखं न दुःखं न मानावमाने च षडूर्मिवर्जं
 निन्दागर्वमत्सरदम्भदर्पेच्छाद्वेषसुखदुःखकामक्रोधलोभमोहहर्षसु उयाहंकारादींश्च हित्वा
 स्ववपुः कुणपमिव दृश्यते यतस्तद्वपुषध्वस्तं संशयविपरीतमिथ्याज्ञानानां यो हेतुस्तेन
 नित्यनिवृत्तस्तन्नित्यबोधस्तत्स्वयमेवावस्थितिस्तं शान्तमचलमद्वयानन्दविज्ञानघन
 एवास्मि ।
 तदेव मम परमधाम तदेव शिखा च तदेवोपवीत च ।
 परमात्मात्मनोरैकत्वज्ञानेन तयोर्भेद एव विभग्नः सा सध्या ॥ २॥

na daṇḍaṁ na śikhāṁ na yajñōpavītaṁ na cācchādanaṁ carati
 paramahaṁsaḥ ।
 na śītaṁ na cōṣṇaṁ na sukhaṁ na duḥkhaṁ na mānāvamānē ca
 ṣaḍūrmivarjaṁ
 nindāgarvamatsaradammarpēcchādvēśasukhaduḥkhakāmakōdhalōbh
 amōhaharṣasu uyāhaṁkāradīṁśca hitvā svavapuḥ kuṇapamiva dr̥ṣyatē
 yatastadvapurapadhvastaṁ saṁśayaviparītamithyājñānānāṁ yō
 hētustēna nityanivṛttastannityabōdhastatsvayamēvāvasthitistaṁ
 śāntamacalamadvayānandavijñānaghana ēvāsmi ।
 tadēva mama paramdhāma tadēva śikhā ca tadēvōpavīta ca ।
 paramātmātmanōrēkatvajñānēna tayōrbhēda ēva vibhagnaḥ
 sā sadhyā ॥ 2॥

“Verse no. 2 = The main rules and codes of conduct that are mandated for a Paramhans Sanyasi and expected to be adhered by him are the following—He should not hold (carry) a staff (Danda) nor wear a tuft of hair on the head (called the Shikha); he should not wear the sacred thread or any covering on the body. He should be free from such notions as having the perception of cold and heat, of insult and honour, of

happiness and joys as well as sufferings and miseries. [That is, he should treat all circumstances with stoic equanimity and fortitude, remaining absolutely unruffled, calm and poised; he should not be upset or become restless even during great emotional upheavals.]

He abandons all the following traits—‘Ninda’ or finding faults with others and criticizing them; ‘Garva’ or having any kind of false ego, pride and arrogance; ‘Matsarya’ or having envy, jealousy, ill-will and malice towards others; ‘Darpa’ or having self praise, pretensions of greatness and self glorification; ‘Ichha’ or having desires, expectations, interests, wants etc.; ‘Dwesh’ or having enmity, hatred, aversion, animosity, resentment, rancour, spite and malice; ‘Sukh’ or the notion of happiness, joys, comfort and pleasure; ‘Dukh’ or the opposite notions of Sukh, i.e. the perception of sorrows, anguish, grief, sufferings, miseries, agonies and pains; ‘Kaam’ or worldly passions, desires, lust, yearning for sensual gratification etc.; ‘Krodh’ or vengeance, anger, wrathfulness, being susceptible to short temper; ‘Lobh’ or greed, avarice, yearnings and rapacity; ‘Moha’ or having attachments and affections, being enamoured and infatuated, having delusions and ignorance; ‘Harsh’ or having the feeling of exhilaration, ecstasy, excessive joy, exultation, gladness, gratefulness; ‘Asuya’ or pricking holes with others, having jealousy and envy; ‘Ahankar’ or having pride, ego, arrogance, hypocrisy, haughtiness; and all other such negative traits.

He treats his body as being good as dead. All his doubts and confusions as well as falsehoods and illusions are dispelled. He is an embodiment of eternal enlightenment and is a self-realised person who expects nothing from this world. He is firmly convinced that his true identity or his true self (which is his Atma) is a stable, constant, infinite and eternal entity; it is matchless in its bliss and felicity; it is pure consciousness personified.

He believes that this firm faith in his ‘true self’ is akin to being established in the supreme abode of Brahm. That is, he is convinced that this realisation about the eternal, imperishable, pure and divine nature of the conscious and enlightened Atma, which is his true ‘self’, makes him fearless from being uprooted from a temporary residence or abode and becoming a homeless vagabond. He feels that he has his Atma as his permanent residence. He believes that since the Atma is his truthful identity, and since the Atma is eternal and imperishable, he too has these grand qualities. [In other words, the realisation that he is not the gross perishable body but the sublime imperishable Atma, that this Atma is where the supreme Brahm resides, and that this Atma is a microcosm of the cosmic Consciousness that prevails uniformly everywhere in the world, instills a sense of fearlessness of becoming homeless if the body dies, or when he has left his walled household behind. For now onwards, the entire world becomes his home.]

He also believes that this firm faith is also like the symbolic tuft of hair on the head (on the cranium) and the sacred thread across his shoulders (which are external symbols or insignia to remind him that he belongs to the group of wise and elderly people who are supposed to be awakened and self-realised, and which are regarded as the quintessential marks of a man of high birth).

He treats the Atma and the Parmatma (i.e. the individual soul at the microcosmic level and the supreme transcendental Soul of the creation at the macrocosmic level) as being synonymous with each other. That is, he firmly believes in the concept of ‘non-duality’. For him, there is no distinction between the two. This erudition and eclectic knowledge is the symbolic sacrament called ‘Sandhya’ as far as he is concerned. [Sandhya is a ritual of prayer offered to the Gods three times a day when two time zones meet, e.g. at dawn when the night meets the day, at noon when

the sun is at its zenith, and at dusk which is the meeting point of the day and the night. Since he believes in non-duality, there is no difference for him between the day and the night, or between the pre-noon hours and the post-noon hours. In other words, he can offer prayers to the God at all times of the day and night; in fact he is expected to remain constantly and perpetually in a meditative state of being focused on his chosen deity.] (2).

सर्वान्कामान्परित्यज्य अद्वैते परमस्थितिः । ज्ञानदण्डो धृतो येन एकदण्डो स उच्यते ।
काष्ठदण्डो धृतो येन सर्वांशि ज्ञानवर्जितः । स याति नरकान्धोरान्महारौरवसञ्ज्ञकान् ।
इदमन्तरं ज्ञात्वा स परमहंसः ॥ ३॥

sarvāṅkāmaṅparityajya advaitē paramasthitiḥ ।
jñānadaṇḍō dhṛtō yēna ēkadaṇḍō sa ucyatē ।
kāṣṭhadaṇḍō dhṛtō yēna sarvāśi jñānavarjitaḥ ।
sa yāti narakāndhōrānmahārauravaśñjñakān ।
idamantaram jñātvā sa paramahamśaḥ ॥ 3॥

“Verse no. 3 = He forsakes all forms of desires, hopes and expectations, and remains ever engrossed in the thoughts of the non-dual supreme transcendental Brahm. He is also known as ‘Ek Dandi’, i.e. one who carries only one staff. This is a symbolic way of asserting that he relies upon only one support, and that is ‘Gyan’, or truthful knowledge of the ultimate reality which is achieved by wisdom, erudition and enlightenment. This Gyan makes him firmly established in the rock solid truth about his real self, and it is his Atma which is Brahm personified.

On the other hand, a person who holds an external wooden staff or scepter as a symbol of his exalted stature as a Sanyasi in society, but remains mentally attached to the world, being internally engrossed or submerged in its thoughts or having any kind of worldly hopes, desires and expectations, is ignorant of the ‘truth’. He is devoid of such eclectic and glorious virtues as true renunciation, contentedness, truthful knowledge, dispassion, detachment, tolerance, fortitude, forbearance etc. which are the hallmarks of a Sanyasi. Such a man just maintains a false façade of being a Sanyasi; he is being deceitful and is an imposter. He has undermined and destroyed the august institution of Sanyas. Such a person goes to the lowest form of hell known as ‘Raurav’. Those who understand this difference between a real Sanyasi and an imposter who acts as a Sanyasi but is isn’t are verily true ‘Paramhans’ (i.e. they are like a wise Swan which has the unique ability to pick and choose what is auspicious and good, and discard what is not). [In other words, a person who understands that external signs or symbols or insignia can cheat the world but not the self is a really realised one. For him, there is therefore no need for wearing the tuft of hair, a sacred thread or holding the staff. What he endeavours is to inculcate the grand, eclectic and holy qualities mentioned above in this verse, such as conquering Ninda, Garva, Matsarya, Darpa etc. Such conquest would indeed be beneficial for his spiritual progress.] (3).

आशाम्बरो न नमर्कारो न स्वधाकारो न निन्दा न स्तुतिर्यादृच्छिको भवेद्भिक्षुर्नाऽऽवाहनं न
 विसर्जनं न मन्त्रं न ध्यानं नोपासनं च न लक्ष्यं नाकक्ष्यं न पृथग्नापृथगहं न न त्वं न सर्व
 चानिकेतस्थितिरिव भिक्षुः सौवर्णादीनं नैव परिगृह्णन् लोकं नावलोकं वाऽऽबाधकं क इति
 चेद्बाधकोऽस्त्येव यस्माद्भिक्षुर्हिरण्यं रसेन दृष्टं च स ब्रह्महा भवेत् ।
 यस्माद्भिक्षुर्हिरण्यं रसेन ग्राह्यं च स आत्महा भवेत् ।
 तस्माद्भिक्षुर्हिरण्यं रसेन न दृष्टं च न स्पृष्टं च न ग्राह्यं च ।
 सर्वे कामा मनोगता व्यावर्तन्ते ।
 दुःखे नोद्विग्नः सुखे न स्पृहा त्यागो रागे सर्वत्र शुभाशुभयोरनभिस्नेहो न द्वेष्टि न मोदं च ।
 सर्वेषामिन्द्रियाणां गतिरुपरमते य आत्मन्येवावस्थीयते ।
 यत्पूर्णानन्दैकबोधस्तदब्रह्माहमस्मीति कृतकृत्यो भवति कृतकृत्यो भवति ॥ ४॥

āśāmbarō na namarkārō na svadhākārō na nindā na stutiryādṛcchikō
 bhavēdbhikṣu ।
 nāvāhanam na visarjanam na mantram na dhyānam nōpāsanam ca ।
 na lakṣyam nākakṣyam na pṛthagñāpṛthagaham na na tvam na sarva
 cānikētasthitirēva bhikṣuḥ sauvarṇādīnam naiva parignahēna lōkam
 nāvalōkam cā bādhakam ka iti cēdbādhakō'styēva ।
 yasmādbhikṣurhiraṇyam rasēna dṛṣṭam ca sa brahmahā bhavēt ।
 yasmādbhikṣurhiraṇyam rasēna grāhyam ca sa ātmahā bhavēt ।
 tasmādbhikṣurhiraṇyam rasēna na dṛṣṭam ca na sprṣṭam ca na grāhyam
 ca । sarvē kāmā manōgatā vyāvartantē ।
 duḥkhē nōdvignaḥ sukhē na sprhā tyāgō rāgē sarvatra
 śubhāśubhayōranabhisnēhō na dvēṣṭi na mōdam ca ।
 sarvēśāmindriyāṇām gaturuparamatē ya ātmanyēvāvasthīyatē ।
 yatpūrṇānandaikabōdhastadabrahmāhamasmīti kṛtakṛtyō bhavati
 kṛtakṛtyō bhavati ॥ 4॥

“Verse no. 4 = He remains free from all expectations of honour and respect as long as he is alive, such as expectation of anyone bowing before him, or anyone offering him gifts or even food to eat. He does not expect anyone honouring and remembering and paying homage to him after his death. He does not pay any heed to being criticised, and remains emotionally calm and unexcited even upon being praised and honoured. He has highest degree of equanimity and forbearance. He remains an itinerant friar or a wandering ascetic or roaming monk willingly and voluntarily throughout the rest of his life (and not forced to do so due to adverse circumstances).

For him there are no traditional rules to be rigidly followed, such as invocation of Gods and offering prayers and oblations to them, dispersing of the invited Gods at the end of a religious ritual or ceremony, chanting or repetition of Mantras, contemplation and meditation, or worship and adoration of any deity. In fact, he has no aim in life and no fear from any quarter; he is under no obligation of any God or any religious sect or dispensation. [This is because he has realised Brahm as his own

true self in the form of his Atma, who is the supreme deity. Therefore, he need not worship anyone else.]

Since he believes in 'non-duality', there is no notion of anything being separate or distinct from any other thing; there is no such idea/concept as mine and yours. He is completely neutral and dispassionate, and therefore it does not matter to him whether anything is universal or not, whether it is uniform or not. [That is, he has no emotions and notions at all; he does not bother or thinks about anything at all; it does not matter to him whether two given entities are different or same; whether anything belongs to you or me. He is equanimity, fortitude, dispassion and indifference personified.]

He has no permanent residence (because he is always on the move), yet he has a stable mind and intellect which do not wander around aimlessly. [That is, his residence is not fixed at one place, but his mind is fixed.] He does not endeavour to accumulate gold and other material things of this world. No object of this world appears too attractive for him, and neither do they look repulsive to him. So, what can hinder his way; what can stop him? A Paramhans mendicant who yearns for gold (or any material wealth of this world) is deemed to have committed a grave sin which is equivalent to killing a Brahmin. He is no better than a Chandala (a low outcaste person who performs the last rites of dead bodies in the cremation ground and stays away from villages and population areas).

Hence, a mendicant Paramhans should neither see, touch or accept gold from any source. All such desires of a true Paramhans are automatically destroyed and annihilated. Therefore, he is fully fulfilled and contented.

He does not become agitated or restless during sorrows and bad times, and neither does he get excited and thrilled during happy and favourable times. He abandons all forms of 'Raaga' or the sense of attachment, longing, infatuation, affection and endearments towards all. He treats both auspicious and inauspicious circumstances with exemplary equanimity and fortitude. He keeps no hatred, ill-will, malice, animosity and rancour towards anyone, nor does he feel endeared to them, or has any emotional attachment with anything or anybody. He does not feel happy and joyous, nor does he feel otherwise.

All his sense organs have become calmed down; they have lost their inherent restless and fidgety nature. He remains ever engrossed in contemplation and meditation upon his eternal Atma which is his essential self. He regards himself as full of pure bliss and happiness; he treats himself as a fount of beatitude and felicity. He regards himself as an embodiment of enlightenment and wisdom; as an embodiment of the supreme transcendental Brahman.

With this firm conviction and faith, he becomes grateful, obliged, fulfilled, contented and accomplished in a wholesome way (4)."

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Chapter 2

The Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda

In this Chapter no. 2 we shall read how the metaphor of the Hansa (a divine Swan) has been employed in the Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda to explain great metaphysical and spiritual concepts. For the purpose of convenience, this Chapter has been divided in the following eight sections and sub-sections:

Section 2.1: Shwetashwatar Upanishad,

(sub-section 2.1.1) Canto 1, verse no. 6.

(sub-section 2.1.2) Canto 3, verse no. 18.

(sub-section 2.1.3) Canto 6, verse no. 15.

Section 2.2: Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4.

Section 2.3: Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 59-65.

Section 2.4: Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16-28, 34, 60-68, 78-79.

Section 2.5: Yogshikha Upanishad,

(sub-section 2.5.1) Canto 1, verse nos. 131-137.

(sub-section 2.5.2) Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11.

(sub-section 2.5.3) Canto 6, verse no. 20, 35-36, 52-54.

Section 2.6: Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 98-102.

Section 2.7: Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 52, 54-55.

Section 2.1

(Sub-section 2.1.1) Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6:

The Krishna Yajur Veda's Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6 describes a creature trapped in this world and roaming in it endlessly as a Hansa does while floating endlessly on the water of a lake. The creature, when compared to a Hansa, is one who is a wise and intelligent person, one who has become self-realised and enlightened. He remains calm while living in this world because he has realized that he is not the 'gross physical body' that the world recognizes as his identity, but the pure conscious Atma, which is a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness that is

pure, holy and divine, living in that body. This supreme realization of the Truth grants tranquility and bliss. To quote—

सर्वाजीवे सर्वसंस्थे बृहन्ते अस्मिन् हंसो भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रे ।
पृथगात्मानं प्रेरितारं च मत्वा जुष्टस्ततस्तेनामृतत्वमेति ॥ ६॥

sarvājīvē sarvasaṁsthē bṛhantē asmin haṁsō bhrāmyatē brahmacakrē ।
pṛthagātmānaṁ prēritāraṁ ca matvā juṣṭastatastēnāmṛtatvamēti ॥ 6॥

“Canto 1, Verse no. 6 = The great wheel of creation has been created by the supreme Brahm, and hence is called ‘Brahm Chakra’. All the living creatures are part of this great wheel—they live in it, have their foundation in it and find their sustenance and rest in it. As a result they continue to endlessly rotate with this wheel in the never-ending cycle of birth and death accompanied by all the attendant delusions, horrors and miseries¹.

When the wise and enlightened creature realises this fact and disassociates himself from this wheel and delusions created by it, instead regarding his ‘true self’ as a separate entity known as the pure consciousness called the Atma which is Brahm personified, it is only then that he finds eternal and immutable bliss, peace and tranquility².

This is the reason why such a creature is referred to as a Hansa or a Swan³. [Refer the fourth word in the verse.] (6).

[Note—¹The enlightened creature understands that it is the gross body that remains trapped in this wheel of creation, but the ethereal Atma cannot be subjected to this entrapments. How this rotating wheel creates a delusion is easy to visualise if one has ever turned rapidly in circles or had ridden a giant wheel. In the former case, even after he has stopped turning, the entire room appears to be going round and round in circles for quite sometimes around him, and the giddy and the stomach-wrenching hollow feeling when the giant wheel turns is to be experienced to be believed. This would happen when the person keeps the eyes open while turning in circles, but if one keeps the eyes closed the effect of this turning would be the minimum. In other words, only as long as the creature is aware of this world and feels that it is a part of it and participating in its activities is the creature affected by the delusions created by this world. On the other hand, if the creature ‘closes its eyes to this world’ or simply ignores it then the cause of delusions would simply not arise.

The deluded creature thinks that his conscious ‘self’ and the supreme Consciousness represented by the transcendental Self (Brahm) are two separate entities. As a result he continues to whirl endlessly in this cycle consisting of births in various forms in this mortal world which sustains and nourishes all the living creatures, and then dying to reach the other world obtained at the end of the present one. That is, he takes birth and dies to take another birth in this world itself, in one or the other forms in which the countless varieties and species of creatures exist. The phrase ‘in this world itself’ is indicative of the fact that life characterised by ‘death and birth’ is limited to ‘this gross mortal world’ and that this cycle is non-existent in the ethereal world of the Spirit and the Atma—because the Atma is eternal,

infinite and imperishable, the Atma is the cosmic Consciousness that has no birth and death. This cycle of birth and death and its attendant horrors happens because the deluded creature thinks that he has a physical body living in this world and doing various deeds in an attempt to satisfy the desires of the sense organs. Naturally therefore the creature would expect some results from these deeds, and then a desire to enjoy the rewards of his efforts. Once he tastes blood so to say, he would want more hunting, and the chain continues. Since the creature continues to have desires till his last minute and goes on doing deed in this world till his last breath, the creature cannot ever expect to find lasting happiness and peace. He would yearn for new lease of life so that his unfilled desires can be fulfilled and the rewards of his previous deeds can be enjoyed by in the new life. This traps him in the wheel created by the supreme Brahm.

Now the question arises why would the supreme Brahm want the creature trapped in it? The answer is that it is a necessary evil which Brahm has to tolerate if it wants to sustain and propagate its own creation. And that is why Brahm created 'Maya' or the power of delusions which would prevent the creature from realising the Truth and then breaking free from the bondage of delusions.

²On the contrary, when the creature has become wise and enlightened by pursuing the Truth, i.e. when he is able to overcome misconceptions induced by delusions and ignorance, and begins to honour the 'true' self in the form of the pure consciousness residing in his own bosom as the microcosmic counterpart of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm, he distances himself from the temptations of getting involved with artificiality and falsehoods which are the trademarks of this world. As a result, a wise and enlightened creature sheds his mortal and gross body that is rotating in this great Brahm Chakra and lives in his causal body where the ethereal Atma or the pure consciousness resides. This frees him from going round and round with this wheel of creation and destruction and instead find eternal freedom marked by beatitude and felicity.

³It would be noted that this living creature that remains trapped in this wheel of creation called the Brahm Chakra is called a 'Hansa' or a Swan. This word implies that the world in which the creature is roaming endlessly is also regarded as a large water body such as a large lake or lagoon etc. because swans are found floating on the surface of water and not sitting on some giant wheel which is the Brahm Chakra here. The swan spends its entire life floating on the surface of the water and produces offspring that also continue to do the same thing. Likewise, the creature continues to roam in this world, spending his entire lifetime endlessly pursuing his desires and ambitions. At the same time, a swan is regarded as a wise bird because it is reputed to drink milk and leave aside its water content, or pick up pearls from an assortment of gems which symbolically indicate its abilities to pick and choose the best from whatever is available. This swan is a bird like other birds, but this capability sets it apart from the rest. Likewise, the creature having a gross body and continuing to roam endlessly in this world is also inherently wise, erudite and intelligent, but out of ignorance he has forgotten his special stature.

The Upanishads on Yoga describe how the practitioner of meditation should contemplate upon his Atma as a Hansa and use the two letters of this word—viz. ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ as Mantra while meditating and doing Pranayam (breath control exercises) much like using the Mantra OM for this purpose. Refer Hanso-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, the Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 82-83 of Sam Veda tradition, Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-132, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, and Canto 6, verse no. 20, 52-54, and Dhyanbindu Upanishad, verse no. 24, 61-65 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]”

(Sub-section 2.1.2) Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 18:

The Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 18 uses the metaphor of the Hansa or the Swan as follows:

नवद्वारे पुरे देही हंसो लेलायते बहिः ।
वशी सर्वस्य लोकस्य स्थावरस्य चरस्य च ॥ १८॥

navadvārē purē dēhī haṁsō lēlāyatē bahiḥ ।
vaśī sarvasya lōkasya sthāvarasya carasya ca ॥ 18॥

“Canto 3, Verse no. 18 = This Supreme Lord who controls the entire animate as well as the inanimate creation as its primary Lord assumes the form of a Swan or the Hansa and lives inside the body of a creature having nine symbolic doors¹ from where it interacts with this external world of material objects and receives its stimuli. In other words, inspite of being the Lord of the world, he begins to treat himself as an ordinary creature and plays around or swims around this world just like a Swan swims around aimlessly in a lake (18).

[Note—¹The *nine doors* are the following-- two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, one mouth, one anus, and one urethra.]

(Sub-section 2.1.3) Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 15:

The Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 15 says:

एको हंसः भुवनस्यास्य मध्ये स एवाग्निः सलिले संनिविष्टः ।
तमेव विदित्वा अतिमृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥ १५॥

ēkō haṁsaḥ bhuvanasyāsyā madhyē sa ēvāgniḥ salilē saṁniviṣṭaḥ ।
tamēva viditvā atimṛtyumēti nānyaḥ panthā vidyatē'yanāya ॥ 15॥

“Canto 6, Verse no. 15 = There resides, in an imperceptible and invisible form, a symbolic divine Swan¹ in this world, making it its eternal abode, much like the fire element being imperceptibly but undeniably present in water. When a spiritual seeker understands this fact and comes to be acquainted with this supreme Divinity known as Brahm residing in his own heart as the eclectic ‘true self’ regarded as a Swan, it is only then that he attains final emancipation and salvation. [This state of enlightenment is called self-realisation which paves the way to Brahm-realisation.] There is no other way (15).

[Note—¹The *Swan* referred to here is the supreme Brahm who resides as the pure conscious Atma hidden latently in the heart of the living creature much like the latent presence of fire in water. There are many instances in the Upanishads where the ‘true self’ or the Atma of a creature is compared to a Swan. An entire Upanishad called Hansa Upanishad belonging to the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition is dedicated to this theme.

At the beginning of creation there was only water everywhere. The earth coagulated and rose to the surface much like butter rises to the surface of milk when it is churned. The energy generated by the severe Tapa done by Brahm manifested as the latent ‘fire’ that heated this earth and kept it inherently warm. This prevented the earth from freezing cold as it resembled a huge iceberg floating on the surface of the cosmic ocean. (Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahmin 2, verse no. 2.) Thus we see that the water, earth and fire co-exist. This was necessary from the perspective of sustenance of creation—for otherwise the water would have frozen everything into ice, and the fire would have scorched to ashes. The earth harbouring life would have died—either by being frozen stiff and getting drowned in the vast ocean, or being reduced to cinders.

Therefore, the supreme creator was very wise in first creating water and then dipping earth on it to make it float. Imagine that a hot ball representing earth—of course earth is a hot ball, for who does not know that the bowls of earth have molten lava and molten iron core which gives the earth its protective magnetic field—floats on the surface of a tub full of cold water, and this water neither boiling over nor the ball losing its warmth! What a miraculous creation has the creator unfolded.

The water element was essential to counter and offset the scorch of the fire element, because had there been no coolant the fire would have burnt everything to ashes even before the first chick symbolically representing all life forms could break through the shell of the cosmic egg. The observation that ‘fire secretly remains in the water’ is proved by the fact that we have ‘warm and hot water’ though basically water is cool and cold. This latent energy of water which makes it warm or hot is the fundamental cause why water is regarded as the harbinger and herald of life in all its form.

It is a well established scientific fact that without water as well as warmth, the latter implying the obvious presence of the fire element, no life is imaginable anywhere. Water consists of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen, both having a high ignition value as is proved by the fact that the celestial cauldron of fire called the Sun consists mainly of hydrogen and helium, which is a relative of hydrogen created by the nuclear fusion method in the Sun’s core, while oxygen is a predominant necessity to ignite any fire and then keep it burning. It is remarkable that the molecule of water contains

hydrogen and oxygen together—both ingredients associated with fire. In other words, water harbours fire element in a latent and integral form.

It is also pertinent to note here that we give ‘oxygen’ to patients whose body has lost its powers to keep warm and retain life forces inside it. This is done in order to keep the furnace of life hot and burning inside the body which is full of fluids symbolising water.

Merely mixing the two gases wouldn’t produce water, as is proved by the fact that though the two gases are abundantly present in the atmosphere, the sky isn’t flooded with an ocean. Water forms on earth simply because the latter provides the necessary ‘heat’ which helps to bind the atoms of these two distinctly separate gases to one another. In other words, ‘water’ has its independent existence only as long as ‘fire’ is present in it as its inseparable and integral part; if ‘fire element’ is removed from water, not only would the atoms of hydrogen and oxygen separate from one another to remove the very cause of water’s existence, but also rob the exalted stature of water as being a sustainer of life on this earth.]

Section 2.2

The Krishna Yajur Veda’s Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4:

[The following narration from the Krishna Yajur Veda’s Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 3-4, describes the virtuous qualities necessary in an aspirant to make him eligible to have practical understanding of the profound metaphysical secrets of this Bindu and have access to its esoteric knowledge.]

यताहारो जितक्रोधो जितसङ्गो जितेन्द्रियः ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो निरहङ्कारो निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥ ३॥
अगम्यागमकर्ता यो गम्याऽगमयमानसः ।
मुखे त्रीणि च विन्दन्ति त्रिधामा हंस उच्यते ॥ ४॥

yatāhārō jitakrōdhō jitasangō jitēndriyaḥ ।
nirdvandvō nirahaṅkāro nirāśīraparigrahaḥ ॥ 3॥

agamyāgamakartā yō gamyā'gamayamānasaḥ ।
mukhē trīṇi ca vindanti tridhāmā haṁsa ucyatē ॥ 4॥

“Canto 1, Verse nos. 3-4 = Those who have a balanced diet (i.e. those who are not indulgent in food and held captive by their taste buds), who have vanquished anger, vengefulness and malice, who remain without any company, preferring to lead a solitary life in peace and seclusion, who have successfully exercised control over their

sense organs, who treat ‘Sukh and Dukh’, i.e. the opposite emotions of pleasures and happiness as well as sorrows, miseries and pains with equal equanimity and fortitude, remaining unmoved, unfaltering, steadfast and tranquil in mental and emotional turmoil caused by both types of opposing and contradictory circumstances, who do not have any kind of Ahankar (pride, ego, arrogance and haughtiness), who have no desires, expectations and hopes of any kind, who do not accept anything from anyone more than the bare necessities for sustenance of life (3), who are determined to find that eclectic knowledge and the source of Divinity that is inaccessible to other people and pursue it with whole hearted diligence and steadfastness—only such illustrious persons who have these divine and eclectic virtues in them, those who possess these eclectic qualities in them can ever hope to have access to the great knowledge pertaining to the three facets or aspects (the so-called three ‘Mukha’ or mouths)¹ of OM along with its three abodes or manifestations². That is why such persons are regarded as being equivalent to the bird Swan or ‘Hansa’, the bird used as a metaphor for purity, immaculacy, wisdom and divinity (4). [3-4].

[Note—¹The Dhyānbindu Upanishad also refers to these *three aspects* of OM as its three eyes in its verse nos. 9-13. They are called the ‘Triad’ of creation and consists of, inter alia, the following-- symbolically refer to so-called ‘Triad’ of creation—(a) such as the Trinity Gods named Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder; (b) the three states of mortal creation at the micro level—the gross body of the individual creature called the waker or Vishwa, the subtle body of the individual creature called the dreamer or Taijas, and the causal body of the individual creature called the deep sleeper or Praagya; (c) the three states of immortal creation at the macro level—the sum total of all the gross bodies in creation called the cosmic waker or Viraat Purush, the sum total of all the subtle bodies in creation called the cosmic dreamer or Hiranyagarbha, and the sum total of all the causal bodies in creation called the cosmic deep sleeper or Ishwar; (d) the three Gunas called Sata (the noblest quality in the creation), Raja (the medium quality) and Tama (the meanest quality that a creature can possess); (e) the three Shaktis or powers and potentials that drive the world on—such as Gyan Shakti or the power of knowledge, Ichha Shakti or the driving power of desires and ambitions, and Kriya Shakti or the ability and strength to carry out actions and do desired deeds; (f) the three planes of time—such as the past, the present and the future.

²The three abodes of OM are the three divine Gods of the Trinity, viz. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder.]

Section 2.3

The Krishna Yajur Veda, Dhyān Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 59-65:

Krishna Yajur Veda’s Dhyān Upanishad primarily deals with meditation and contemplation on Brahm in order to obtain emancipation and salvation of the soul of the creature. In its verse nos. 24, 61-65 it deals with the esoteric and eclectic concept

of 'Hansa'. It says that the supreme transcendental Brahm, known also as Pranav, resides in the heart of all the living beings in the form of a Hansa. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is a personification of Brahm and is like the divine Swan, but he was unaware of his divinity and sublimity, his exalted stature, till that was pointed out to him in this verse. So he must become one like a 'swan', remind himself constantly that he is like a swan, and he must do not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan. The highlight of its verse no. 63 is that it asserts that the Mantra 'Hansa' is superior to the Gyatri Mantra.

Now let us see what the Dhyani Bindu Upanishad has to say on this subject in its verse nos. 24, 59-65—

गमागमस्थं गमनादिशून्यमोङ्कारमेकं रविकोटिदीप्तिम् ।
पश्यन्ति ये सर्वजानान्तरस्थं हंसात्मकं ते विरजा भवन्ति ॥ २४॥

gamāgamasthaṁ gamanādiśūnyamōṅkāramēkaṁ ravikōṭidīptim ।
paśyanti yē sarvajānāntarasthaṁ haṁsātmakaṁ tē virajā bhavanti ॥ 24॥

“Verse no. 24 = Those who experience and witness the presence of the supreme transcendental Consciousness in the form of a divine 'Hansa' (Swan) that resides in the inner-self of the living being feel spiritually fulfilled and are deemed to be realised and successful in their spiritual endeavour. This Hansa is as splendid and radiant as millions of suns taken together. [This is because the consciousness that is present inside the subtle heart of the creature is like the celestial sun that shines brilliantly in the sky above the earth.]

This metaphoric 'Hansa' is a mysterious and enigmatic entity. It shows movement on the one hand and remains unmoving on the other hand¹ (24).

[Note—¹During the twenty-four hour period covering a single day and night, a person inhales and exhales, or breathes, roughly twenty-one thousand times because each cycle of inhalation and exhalation is equivalent to saying one Mantra 'Hansa' consisting of the two syllables 'Ha and Sa'. Refer Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 93 which clearly asserts that the 'Hansa' is a metaphor for Pran. So when it is said in the present verse that Hansa shows movement for instance, it refers to the movement in the form of the vital winds such as Pran (breath) which comes in and goes out of the body, the Apaana wind that moves down the intestines and helps the movement of food in the intestines, the Udaana wind that helps the body to rise etc. The proof of their movement lies in the fact that all the different functions of the body, including external movements such as walking, holding, speaking, eating and excreting etc. that are done by a man while awake are controlled by these winds, but when the man sleeps the external activities cease, making it appear that the vital winds are not moving. When a man is asleep, his vital winds are now moving inside his Naadis or nerves and veins in the form of his Pran or the vital life-giving factor called consciousness. But these winds present inside the body do not appear to move a bit; they do not show any vivid sign of

movement at all; no one can observe the movement of the Udaan wind, the Vyaan wind or the Samaan wind and even the Apaana wind that are present inside the body of the creature. Even in the outside world, no one can actually see the wind or air move from one place to another; their movement is deduced indirectly when we observe the movement of leaves for example on a tree. Thus, this Hansa in the form of the Pran shows movement on the one hand, and remains immobile on the other hand.

This verse essentially says that the supreme transcendental Brahm known also as cosmic Consciousness resides in all the living beings in the form of a Hansa or a divine Swan. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is like the divine swan, but he was unaware of his divinity and sublimity, his exalted stature, till that was pointed out to him in this verse. So he must become one like a ‘swan’, remind himself constantly that he is like a swan, and he must do not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan.]”

वामदक्षिणमार्गेण चञ्चलत्वान्न दृश्यते ।
 आक्षिप्तो भुजदण्डेन यथोच्चलति कन्दुकः ॥ ५९॥
 प्राणापानसमाक्षिप्तस्तद्वज्जीवो न विश्रमेत् ।
 अपानात्कर्षति प्राणोऽपानः प्राणाच्च कर्षति ॥ ६०॥
 खगरज्जुवदित्येतद्यो जानाति स योगवित् ।
 हकारेण बहिर्याति सकारेण विशेत्पुनः ॥ ६१॥

vāmadakṣiṇamārgēṇa cañcalatvānna dṛśyatē ।
 ākṣiptō bhujadaṇḍēna yathōccalati kandukaḥ ॥ 59॥
 prāṇāpānasamākṣiptastadvajjīvō na viśramēt ।
 apānātkaṛṣati prāṇō'pānaḥ prāṇācca karṣati ॥ 60॥
 khagarajjuvadityētadyō jānāti sa yōgavit ।
 hakārēṇa bahiryāti sakārēṇa viśētpunaḥ ॥ 61॥

59-61. The Pran (here referring to the breath passing through the nostrils when one breathes) moves sometimes through the path which goes to the left (of the central Sushumna Naadi, i.e. through the Ida Naadi passing up to the left nostril), and sometimes through the one that goes to the right (of the central Sushumna Naadi, i.e. through the Pingla Naadi passing up to the right nostril). The Pran wind is so subtle and sublime that it cannot be visibly seen.

Just like a ball thrown at random by the player moves restlessly in various directions, bouncing here and there and changing its course every now and then unpredictably, the creature is also buffeted and kicked around (like the ball)¹ by the two prominent winds called the Pran and Apaana, and he moves restlessly in so many places (and in so many wombs or takes so many births).

The tug and pull of these two winds on the creature is much like a bird being pulled down by the string tied to its legs while it attempts to fly off in the sky². An

ascetic who is well acquainted with this fact is regarded as really wise and enlightened.

While the Pran leaves the body it makes a sound equivalent to the Sanskrit alphabet 'Ha' (equivalent to the sound made while pronouncing *her*; this is the sound made in the throat whilst one exhales breath with mouth open). On the other hand when it is taken in, it makes the sound of the Sanskrit alphabet 'Sa' (equivalent to the sound made while pronouncing *sir*; this is heard when one inhales air through the clenched teeth but open mouth). [Refer verse no. 24 also.] (59-61).

[Note—¹The same idea has been described in Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 27-28 of Sam Veda tradition. It says—"Just like a ball or balloon being thrown or kicked around by players, a creature (an individual) cannot remain stable and steady for long because it is under the spell of Pran, Apan and other vital winds which constantly keep it restless, agitated, always mobile and fidgety and in a state of constant flux (27).

The creature, under the buffeting influence or thrust of the vital winds or airs, is compelled to move upwards or downwards, to the left and to the right (like an air-filled balloon) so swiftly that it loses its bearings and does not know what is happening to it (28) [27-28]".

These winds slap and dash against the sail of a ship on a high sea, as it were, tossing and turning it with the lashing of every gust. The creature cannot sit quietly and calmly in the ship because these vital wind forces continue to flap and flutter the sail, whipping the ship recklessly in the churning waters of the sea represented by this world.

The creature's body is like the balloon or a football, as it is filled with air called the vital winds. Even as a balloon or an air-filled light ball moves with the slightest touch, is easily tossed about violently in a squall or gale and it cannot remain at a single point for long even when there is no apparent breeze blowing, the creature also has an inbuilt and inherent natural tendency to be always on the move, remain restless and be fidgety. The biggest proof of this fact is witnessed when a dead body is observed. All the rest of the organs of a body while it was alive are present in a corpse, the only imperceptible element which has left the body is 'Pran' or the vital wind. The corpse becomes heavy than a living man and it lies motionless if it is not moved by others; it has no capacity to move on its own and it becomes heavy like lead. So it is clear that it was the 'Pran' that made the body light weight, agile and active much like the air-filled balloon or ball. Once the Pran leaves the body, the latter becomes heavy as lead.

The creature is flung around so rapidly in quick succession in waves of emotions and sentiments originating in its heart and mind due to the various influences of the external world that it is not able to discern and make out what is transpiring. It becomes completely disoriented in the topsy-turvy path of transmigration. It does not get a chance to bring itself together and realise who it is, what it truly is, where does it belong, what is the correct direction it should take and which direction it is actually heading to, where should it go and where it should not. Taking the example of a boat in a stormy high sea, the harried creature is so rapidly hurled and tossed about like a ball and thrown over board that it is more concerned with grabbing any float at hand just to avoid getting drowned than to focus on long term spiritual goals of life. Its immediate concern is the survival in the next moment, and not the moment

beyond the first. Another good example would be a balloon or a dry leaf or a kite caught in a storm. There is no need to elaborate what happens to them. The allegory will aptly summarise the comic but alarming situation the trapped creature faces.

²The analogy of the *bird* is used here to emphasise the point that the creature has a natural tendency to remain free like the bird, but it allows itself to be tied voluntarily in shackles of delusions pertaining to this world out of its own ignorance, and its unending greed and desires, and gets trapped as a result much like the bird which falls for the trap laid for it by the cunning bird-catcher. The tug and pull in the world with its astounding variety of magnificent charms and fascinating colours, no matter how transient and horrifying they are in the long run, are nevertheless very enthralling and captivating for the time being for the creature, and the latter has no inclination to look ahead and see the horrendous consequences of falling for them. This is the ‘downward pull of the Apaana wind’, used here in a metaphoric way because it is this wind that moves down the body through the intestines and helps to push the eaten food down the alimentary canal and out through the anus. On the other hand, the Pran moves in the upwards directions as is obvious when we observe the breath which moves out of the lungs and goes up to the nostril to be exhaled. This ‘upwards movement of the Pran’ is a metaphoric way of saying that the creature is seeking spiritual upliftment, it is ‘looking up’.]

हंसहंसेत्यमं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा ।
 शतानि षट्दिवारात्रं सहस्राण्येकविंशतिः ॥ ६२॥
 एतन्सङ्ख्यान्वितं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा ।
 अजपा नाम गायत्री योगिनां मोक्षदा सदा ॥ ६३॥

haṁsahaṁsētyamaṁ mantraṁ jīvō japati sarvadā ।
 śatāni ṣaṭdivārātraṁ sahasrāṇyēkaviṁśatiḥ ॥ 62॥
 ētansaṅkhyānvitaṁ mantraṁ jīvō japati sarvadā ।
 ajapā nāma gāyatrī yōgināṁ mōkṣadā sadā ॥ 63॥

“Verse no. 62-63. Since these two alphabets ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ form the word ‘Hansa’¹ meaning a divine Swan (representing the immaculate, uncorrupted, untainted and divine Brahm, and implying the constant assertion of the creature that he is as immaculate and pure as the Swan representing this Brahm), it is deemed that all the living beings (here referring to the human beings and other creatures who breathe air specially) are constantly doing Japa (repetition) of the divine Mantra pertaining to the supreme Brahm. This Japa is done involuntarily and automatically approximately twenty one thousand six hundred times because this is the number of times one breathes during the course of a day consisting one day and night².

This is equivalent to doing Japa using the famous and most acclaimed Gayatri Mantra as far as the Yogi who is a well established, wise, erudite and enlightened ascetic or any other practitioner of meditation and contemplation is concerned. This automatic Japa of the Mantra ‘Hansa-Hansa’ repeatedly and incessantly by the ascetic

provides him the same benefit of emancipation and salvation that is obtained by repeating the Mantra of Gayatri³ (62-63).

[Note—¹The Upanishadic sage establishes uniformity and oneness with the two great philosophies and metaphysical concepts of the scriptures—‘So-a-ham’ which means ‘that is me’, and ‘Tattwa-masi’ which means ‘the essence is pure consciousness and it is me’. The word ‘that’ refers to Brahma which is the universal and absolute Truth and Reality about the existence, and has the qualities, inter alia, of enlightenment, of being eternal, omnipotent, universal, omnipresent, immanent, omniscient etc. When the seeker/aspirant focuses his attention on the self represented by the letter ‘Sa’ (self) and the ‘Khechari Mudra’ (when he is unconscious of the external world and focuses his attention on the glorious supreme entity present in the center of his eyebrows), he realises the truth of the maxim ‘So-a-ham’. When he opens his eyes of wisdom, the truth of the 2nd tenet ‘Tattwa-masi’ dawns on him. Put simply, it means that the creature realises that ‘he is the same as the supreme Brahma who resides in his Atma/soul present in his bosom/heart’. At the same time, ‘the external world seen through this eye of wisdom symbolised by the presence of the divine swan in his eyes is the same Brahma who has revealed himself in this multifarious, diverse and myriad world’. This is the essential truth, or ‘Tattwa’.

Refer Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 61-64, 78-79.

²The Amrit Naad Upanishad says that a living being breathes 1, 13, 680 times during the course of a day and night.

³The *Gayatri Mantra* has two versions which are presented here. According to one version, it is based on the typical ‘Gayatri Chanda’ which is a poetical composition consisting of three stanzas or lines each having eight letters or syllables. The total number of letters or syllables is thus twenty four. The Gayatri extolled by Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14 is the one strictly conforming to this rule. On the other hand, the usual and commonly known Gayatri Mantra has four steps or stanzas and is based on the composition style called the ‘Anushtup Chanda’.

The ‘Gayatri Chanda’ is used to compose the sacred hymns of the Vedas. Amongst the different composition styles, this is regarded as the best style of Chanda in which the Vedas were revealed (Jaimini Brahman, 2/227) because it has the divine virtue and supernatural powers that provides protection to the Pran of the person who says the Gayatri Chanda and elevates his stature to that of the celestial Sun.

Let us first see the typical *Gyatri Chand pattern* of this divine Mantra. The Gayatri Mantra based on the style of this poetical composition is described in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14, of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. This Mantra having three steps is extolled as the one which is superior to other forms of the Gayatri Mantra having four steps because this three-stepped Mantra is synonymous with Pran, i.e. it is the life or the essence of all that exists.

The Gayatri Mantra having three lines is the following—“Tatsaviturvarnyam Dhimahi Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayat”. The fourth line honours and glorifies this Gayatri as a manifestation of the Sun God, and as brilliant and splendorous as it. It is--“Paro Rajase Suvarnam”. Since the Sun is a visible manifestation of the supreme Brahm who is the Transcendental

Consciousness of the entire creation at the macro level, having the Atma resident in the bosom of the individual creature as its micro level counterpart and Pran as its subtle manifestation, the Gayatri Mantra is in honour of the supreme Authority of creation, i.e. Brahm.

Now the question arises that if the three lines are the complete Mantra, then what was the purpose of including the fourth line? It must be especially noted in this context here that this fourth step of leg of the Gayatri Mantra does not consist of any word which is a part of the main Mantra, but is only meant to establish its divine stature as the citadel for all spiritual Mantras; it is intended to give this Gayatri its place of honour in the pantheon of divine Mantras. Besides this, the fourth leg is visualised as a symbol of stability because anything that has four legs is more stable and steady as compared to one with only three.

Therefore, last stanza is like an epithet highlighting the magnificent divinity and spiritual value of the Gayatri Mantra. It is akin to the Sun shining in the sky, and all other planets and their satellites such as the moon shine because they reflect this light from their surface. The Sun is at the centre of the solar system even as the Gayatri is at the symbolic hub of all divinity and spiritually empowered Mantras. It is also akin to the Pran which supports life in a gross body of a creature and is an acronym for life as a whole. The Pran symbolically illuminates the dark realm of the body from the inside while the Sun does the same from the outside.

The actual Gayatri Mantra that should be preached to the spiritual aspirant consists of the first three steps as described in verse nos. 1-3 of Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14.

This famous Mantra is dedicated to the Sun God who is a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm. It is this Mantra—which is a group of ethereal words having profound spiritual value and metaphysical importance. It is called Gayatri because it gave protection to the Pran--Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14, verse no. 4. It has been accepted as a manifestation of Pran in Shatpath Brahman, 1/3/5/15, while it is praised as having the potentials of Agni (fire) present in the faculty of speech known as Vak in Taittiriya Sanhita, 3/2/9/3, as Tej (energy) in Shatpath Brahman, 1/8/2/13, and as Brahm (the supreme transcendental consciousness) in Maitri Brahman, 4/3/1. According to the Purans (mythological histories of the Hindus), the Gayatri has been praised having manifested in the form of the Trinity Gods—Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder--Skanda Puran, Kashi Khand, Purva, 4/9/58. Whatever that exists is a revelation of Gayatri because it is a manifestation of Brahm—Chandogya Upanishad, 3/12/1. In fact this whole earth that gives refuge to all the life forms in this world is a manifestation of Gayatri-- Chandogya Upanishad, 3/12/2. By worshipping it, a person is blessed with worldly assets such as abundant livestock and flourishing family, a long, healthy and active life, wealth and fortunes, good name and fame, as well as spiritual attainment in the form of Brahm realisation—Atharva Veda, 19/71/1.

The Gayatri Mantra has been expounded and elucidated upon in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14 and other Upanishads, such as the Savitri Upanishad which is entirely dedicated to it, the Maitrayanyu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 7, and the Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 3, Section 12, verse nos. 1-9 belonging to the Sam Veda tradition. Besides these,

the Gayatri Upanishad appears as eight assorted verses or Kandikas numbering 31-38 of the Gopath Brahman belonging to the Atharva Veda.

It has been said in the scriptures that Brahmins, the highest class amongst the humans and who are regarded as the most learned and wise amongst them, were born from Gayatri, thereby drawing a parallel between the highest stature and exalted standing of Brahmins amongst the creatures and the Gayatri amongst the hymns. It is pertinent to note here by the way that Kshatriyas, the warrior class, were born from the Chanda known as Trishtup, and Vaishya, the trading class, from the Chanda known as Jagati. In other words, the divine and eclectic powers encrypted in the Trishtup Chanda revealed themselves as the Kshatriya, and those of the Jagati as the Vaishya. The Trishtup Chanda has four lines each having eleven letters or syllables, totaling forty four letters or syllables in all, while the Jagati Chanda has six lines with eight letters or syllables each, totaling to forty eight letters or syllables.

(b) According to some schools of philosophy, the Gayatri Mantra composed in the style of an Anushtup Chanda is to be worshipped. Therefore, the Mantra according to this school of thinking is the following--‘OM BHURBHUVAHA SVAHA¹, TATSAVIURVARENYAM², BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAH³, DHIYO YO NAH PRACODAYAT⁴’. It means ‘OM is the supreme, transcendental Brahm. He is the lord of creation of the terrestrial, the celestial and heavenly worlds. I offer my oblations to you. That Brahm is luminous like the sun. He is excellent, the best, the most exalted, a destroyer of sins, and a divine entity. May he imbibe, infuse and inspire our intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that we are purified and move on the righteous and noble path’. The four phrases of the Gayatri Mantra are clearly marked by small numerals in this Mantra. This Mantra appears in the Rig Veda (3/62/10), the Sam Veda (1462), and Yajur Veda (3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/6).]

अस्याः सङ्कल्पमात्रेण नरः पापैः प्रमुच्यते ।
 अनया सदृशी विद्या अनया सदृशो जपः ॥ ६४॥
 अनया सदृशं पुण्यं न भूतं न भविष्यति ।
 येन मार्गेण गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मस्थानं निरामयम् ॥ ६५॥

asyāḥ saṅkalpamātrēṇa naraḥ pāpaiḥ pramucyatē ।
 anayā sadṛśī vidyā anayā sadṛśō japaḥ ॥ 64॥
 anayā sadṛśaṁ puṇyaṁ na bhūtaṁ na bhaviṣyati ।
 yēna mārgeṇa gantavyaṁ brahmasthānaṁ nirāmayam ॥ 65॥

“Verse no. 64-65 = When the wise and erudite ascetic or any spiritual aspirant gives this sound of breath (i.e. the sound of Ha + Sa as described in verse nos. 61-63) going out of the body and coming in it the same importance, the same significance, the same respect, the same dignity and the same honour that any eclectic and divine Mantra (such as the famous Gayatri Mantra or any other Mantra for that matter) is given, then this sound of breath (‘Hansa’) gives him the same benefit as any other famous Mantra.

He is able to obtain freedom from the ill effects of all sins and their evil consequences, and is able to reach and have access to the supreme state of Brahm realisation. There is no other Vidya (mystical knowledge and expertise) to match it; there is no Japa (repetition of a Mantra) equivalent to this constant and effortless repetition of the Mantra known as ‘Hansa’¹; and there is no other more auspicious deed than this (because it helps the man to focus his attention constantly, consistently and persistently on Divinity, and veer his mind away from this world of artificiality and delusions.

There is no Mantra as potential and holy as this subtle and sublime unspoken Mantra known as ‘Hansa’—there has never been and there would ever be (64-65).

[Note—¹This is because this Mantra Hansa is repeatedly automatically when the man breathes—refer verse no. 61. Breathing is an effortless and natural exercise for a man, requiring no special attention, efforts, exertion and energy so much so that even an unconscious man or a sleeping man breathes just like when he was wide awake and active.]”

Section 2.4

The Krishna Yajur Veda, Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16-28, 34, 60-68, 78-110:

Krishna Yajur Veda’s Brahm Vidya Upanishad has a number of verses dedicated to the concept of Hansa, and it goes on to assert that it is the best Mantra with which a wise and enlightened ascetic should do Yoga (meditation) as well as Japa (repetition of Mantra). Such verses are nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64 and 78-79. Now let us see what they have to say on the subject.

सकारं च हकारं च जीवो जपति सर्वदा ।
नाभिरन्ध्राद्विनिष्क्रान्तं विषयव्याप्तिवर्जितम् ॥ १६॥

sakāraṁ ca hakāraṁ ca jīvō japati sarvadā ।
nābhirandhrādviniṣkrāntaṁ viṣayavyāptivarjitam ॥ 16॥

“Verse no. 16 = The Jiva (i.e. the life-consciousness present inside the gross body of the living creature) involuntarily does a constant Japa of the two holy Mantras—i.e. ‘Sa’ and ‘Ha’¹. [Japa refers to the repetition of an esoteric group of letters which are called a holy Mantra. They are said to possess mystical and divine powers, and are used as a tool to focus attention and energy during meditation and contemplation. The concept of involuntary Japa has been described in verse nos. 78-79 below.]

The mystical effect of this involuntary Japa is that the Jiva (in the form of his subtle Atma or conscious life factor) moves upwards or looks upwards from the ‘Nabhi Randhra’ (literally the subtle aperture of the body represented by the navel where this life factor is supposed to live)².

This Jiva is not affected by any of the flaws and shortcomings that are inherent to this material world of sense objects³ (16).

[Note--¹When the creature breathes, the inhaled air produces a sound which is equivalent to the letter 'Sa' in the mouth, and the exhaled air produces the sound equivalent of the letter 'Ha' in the throat. The combined effect is the creature is involuntarily repeating the great Mantra 'So-a-ham', meaning 'that essential and absolute Truth of creation that is known as Brahm is none but I', or 'the supreme Truth is my true self and it is me'. Here 'me' or 'I' refers to the soul. In other words, the creature is involuntarily, at the subtle and atomic level of his existence, recognizing and accepting the spiritual fact that he is not an ordinary component of the world but the supreme Brahm personified in his form. This is called the exalted state of self-realisation and enlightenment.

Since breathing is an automatic and involuntarily exercise done regularly and without any effort whatsoever, when the wise and enlightened aspirant understands that each breath is tantamount to repeating the eclectic Mantra 'Hansa', he is deemed to be doing an involuntarily and unbroken Japa day in and day out.

²The *Nabhi Randhra* is the virtual center of the body as the site of the navel. This is because—(a) It is through this cite that the embryo draws its nourishment when it lay in the mother's womb, which is like saying that the lifeless clump of flesh was infused the spark of life and vitality through this hole. (b) It is here that all the Naadis or nerves in the body are said to have their center in the Nabhi Kanda, and it is from here that they radiate out to various parts of the body. (c) The navel is believed to be the center of the Nabhi Chakra, the subtle energy center which is the focus of the sun's energy which is concentrated here. It is in this center where the sun is shining in a symbolic way in the body of the creature like it does in the sky. The point of the sky where the celestial sun is located is regarded as the navel of the Viraat Purush, the invisible, macrocosmic and all-incorporating gross body of the supreme Brahm. The navel of the individual creature occupies the same importance because the latter is regarded as an image of the Viraat Purush. The subtle form of the sun located here energises the body much like the celestial sun energises the world from its center located in the sky.

Since the creature draws its energy, vitality, strength and nourishment from the mother's blood through the placenta attached to the navel, the latter is like the aperture of the mouth through which one draws or sucks in liquids through the bore of a straw dipped in the latter. That is why this navel is called a 'Randhra' which literally means a slit or opening present in the body. This is the picture at the micro level of creation in relation with the individual creature. When it is extended to the macro level, then the cosmic embryo would be the Hiranyagarbha and the subtle aperture from where it draws its nourishment and dynamic creative energy from Brahm to reveal itself in the macrocosmic gross body known as the Viraat Purush would be represented by the celestial Sun. That is why the Sun is regarded as the cosmic center of creativity, energy, vitality and life; it is the cosmic swirling center of dynamic energy. It is like the 'navel' of the Viraat Purush much like the navel that is present in the body of the individual creature because the latter is the microcosmic visible manifestation of the former.]

तेनेदं निष्कलं विद्यात्क्षीरात्सर्पिर्यथा तथा ।
कारणेनात्मना युक्तः प्राणायामैश्च पञ्चभिः ॥ १७॥

tēnēdaṁ niṣkalaṁ vidyātkṣīrātsarpiryathā tathā ।
kāraṇēnātmanā yuktaḥ prāṇāyāmaiśca pañcabhiḥ ॥ 17॥

“Verse no. 17 = This essential entity known as the Atma (soul or pure consciousness) of the living being (creature) is pure and wholesome like the clarified butter which is extracted by churning the milk, and is a refined and purest essence present in it¹.

This Atma is known by the five dimensions or parameters of life called the ‘Panch Prans’, or the five forms in which life exists in this world² (17).

[Note--¹In other words, the Atma is the purest form of life in this world. It is the real essence of life in all its forms. It is immaculate and uncorrupt; it is wholesome and without any faults associated with the world much like the butter which has nothing to do with the adulteration of milk with water, for once the butter is extracted from milk it loses its wholesomeness. The ‘churning’ of the milk is a symbolic way of indicating that the Atma is hidden in this world and can be known only by diligent effort, by deep research and contemplation, by doing meditation and study.

²The five forms of life or Pran refer to the five basic elements in existence—such as earth, water, fire, air and sky. These five are the fundamental building blocks of life much like the atoms which are at the core of the molecules that combine in various permutations to metamorphose into the uncountable number and variety of gross things in this world. Taken in their physical elementary forms, all of them are lifeless entities, but the great mystery of creation is that the same elements exhibit stupendous life-bearing abilities in this world in their subtle forms. Thus, there must be some mystical power that helps them do so, and it is this power that is being referred to here as the consciousness or Atma. When these elements are injected with the Atma, they begin to show vital signs of life and activity. To illustrate this point, we can take a simple example of a balloon. When the balloon is filled with air, it tosses about on its own; if it is filled with some light gas, it even rises on its own to reach high altitudes. The earth is a lifeless clod of mud or hard rock, but the same earth harbours an astounding variety of vibrant life forms in its bosom. The factor that helps bring about this is known as the Atma.

The five Prans are also called the five forms of the air or wind element which infuses life in the creature’s body. These five vital airs are the following—Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Vyana. The statement that ‘the Atma is known by the five dimensions or parameters of Pran’ establishes that the two entities—the Atma and the Pran—are synonymous with each other; they are like the two sides of the same coin known as ‘life’.

The five forms of Prans are called the Atma’s five ‘Kalaas’, and they have been described in verse no. 18 below.]

चतुष्कला समायुक्तो भ्राम्यते च हृदिस्थितः ।
गोलकस्तु यदा देहे क्षीरदण्डेन वा हतः ॥ १८॥

catuṣkalā samāyuktō bhrāmyatē ca hṛdisthitaḥ ।
gōlakastu yadā dēhē kṣīradaṇḍēna vā hataḥ ॥ 18॥

“Verse no. 18 = Just like the milk is churned by the churning rod, the main vital wind present in the body, called the Pran, keeps the four other forms or aspects of this vital wind, called its four Kalaas¹, to remain activated and circulating in the body through the medium of the four sections of the heart². [In other words, the breath called the main Pran keeps the body alive, thereby ensuring the heart beats and helps in circulating the blood and the other four forms of the Pran inside the body.] (18).

[Note—¹The word *Kalaa* refers to the different aspects or forms of an entity. The Pran is the vital wind or air element that sustains life in a man. The chief form of this air element that sustains life in the body is called ‘Pran’, and the term is usually applied to the breath. But besides this, there are four other types of main Prans such as Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Vyan. These are the names given to the vital wind in order to distinguish between the various functions or roles that it performs inside the body. This classification is done in order to study this air or wind element in a comprehensive way just like we classify any given subject into various streams or branches to facilitate study and analysis. Therefore, hypothetically, the Pran is divided into five main Kalaas. Thus, there is the main Pran and its four Kalaas as follows—(i) The ‘Pran’ is the wind element which, as breath, is exhaled as well as inhaled and is responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the body; it is considered the chief wind in the whole setup because without the life-infusing breath, no other wind would be of any significance to the creature. (ii) The ‘Apaana’ is the wind that passes down the intestines and is responsible for digestion of the food taken by the creature and its excretion through the anus and urinary organs (kidneys). (iii) The ‘Samaana’ is the wind that is responsible for equal distribution of nourishment throughout the body, as well as in circulation of blood. (iv) The ‘Udaana’ is the wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases in the body through the nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough. (v) And finally the ‘Vyan’ is the wind that helps in maintaining equilibrium and pressure within the body, and it also controls the functioning of the other winds.

The main Pran or breath is the one which keeps the entire machinery working. If a man stops to breathe, or when his supply of fresh breath is cut off as in the case of strangulation, then neither can the heart nor the remaining four vital winds can keep him alive. The heart would cease to beat and the other four Kalaas of the Pran would become defunct as soon as the Pran (breath) is cut off.

The breath or Pran is depicted here as a ‘churning rod’. If we see the structure of the wind pipe, it indeed looks like a length of pipe, resembling a churning rod, going down into the body from the opening of the nostrils.

From the metaphysical point of view, there is another dimension of this verse. The body of the man is said to have the following five Kalaas which

represent the five sheaths that surround his Atma or pure consciousness—the Anna Maye Kosh or the food sheath, the Pran Maye Kosh or the vital wind or air sheath, the Mano Maye Kosh or the mental sheath, the Vigyan Maye Kosh or the intellect sheath, and the Anand Maye Kosh or the bliss sheath. These sheaths cover the Atma and determine the Atma’s characters, temperament, nature, inclinations and behavioural patterns in this world. The Pran Maye Kosh is the churning-rod here because the rest of the body is kept alive by its energizing and revitalizing effect.

²The heart has four sections—two auricles and two ventricles. The four must work in harmony and with perfect coordination in order to keep the man alive. The Pran as breath keeps the heart beating and supplies fresh oxygen to the body which oxidizes and revitalizes the various tissues and organs of the body while at the same time helping to remove or purge the body of all impurities and toxins such as poisonous gases like carbon dioxide etc. that have accumulated due to metabolic activities inside it.]

एतस्मिन्वसते शीघ्रमविश्रान्तं महाखगः ।

यावन्निश्वासितो जीवस्तावन्निष्कलतां गतः ॥ १९॥

ētasminvasatē śīghramaviśrāntaṁ mahākhagaḥ ।

yāvanniśvasitō jīvastāvanniṣkalatāṁ gataḥ ॥ 19॥

“Verse no. 19 = The great and swift Bird symbolising the Atma or pure consciousness of the creature, which incidentally is the true identity of the latter, resides in a restless manner in this body¹.

When the breath stops, i.e. when the body dies, the living being called the Jiva becomes lifeless or loses all his Kalaas². In other words, when the Pran leaves the body, all other vital signs of life also cease to exist, and the Jiva shows no characteristics and attributes that had distinguished it while it was alive. [This is because all dead bodies are alike. It is only when a man is alive that each individual person depicts his unique personality and character traits, his typical way of speaking, behaving, writing, interacting, thinking etc. So symbolically, when the breath is stopped, he also stops to exhibit his uniqueness and individuality. The ‘Jiva’ dies as soon as the breath known as the Pran stops. What remains is the ‘non-Jiva’ aspect of the gross body.] (19).

[Note—¹The Atma is compared to the big bird such as a falcon or eagle or kite which is accustomed to a free-flying life in the sky being suddenly trapped in a small cage. This bird would become extremely agitated and restless.

It is ‘restless’ in the sense that it is never satisfied with this body and never finds peace while residing inside it. It always wants this and that; it is in a constant state of uneasiness and flux. The bird would be endlessly restless and clawing at the walls of the cage in its attempt to break free; it would be hopping mad from one corner to another in its bid to find a way out of its prison-like confinement though no string might be tied to its legs to keep it in forced bondage and the bird-catcher might even give it proper and adequate food to eat.

It is 'swift' because as soon as it finds an opportunity it would immediately fly off to freedom. Similarly, the Atma takes a fraction of a second to leave the body when the creature dies. There is another connotation to the word 'swift'. The subtle mind is very agile and swift as it keeps on changing from subject to subject like a bird hopping around when picking grains from the ground. Even the gross body is very restless and swift in the sense that it continuously changes position from moment to moment; it is fidgety and twitchy.

In the context of the Atma which represents the creature's 'true identity and his true self', the condition is similar. The bird got caught because of its greediness and ignorance that it is being trapped when it swooped down on the bait shown by the bird-catcher. The Atma similarly got trapped in this body when it got enticed by the attractions and charms of this deluding and entrapping world. Since the world can be enjoyed by the medium of a gross body having organs of perception and action and not in the ethereal form of the Spirit and Consciousness that do not have any grossness in them, the Atma willingly fell in the trap of acquiring a body for its self. It was then too late for it; once inside the body it began to experience its horrors and limitations, and yearned for freedom.

But even as the bird is so stupid that if once given a chance to fly free it would again fall prey to another bait, the Atma of the creature also leaves one body at the time of death and re-enters another body instantly in the hope of further enjoying the material comforts proffered by the material world and the pleasure derived by the gross organs of the body, instead of remaining eternally free like the ethereal Spirit. Another reason for it to enter another body is the fact that in the earlier one the Atma had thought that the deeds done by the body were actually being done by it and therefore it is entitled to their rewards or benefits. Since this is not possible in one life time and also since the last deed done would bear results after some time, the Atma takes another body. Besides this, there are many unfulfilled desires and aspirations of the previous phase of life in the earlier body which needs to be addressed by the Atma. This is the reason for it taking a new birth.

²As has been explained in note to verse no. 18 above, the word 'Kalaa' refers to changeable aspects of an entity. A dead body does not show any signs of life such as movement etc. It remains in a static and unchanging state. This is what is meant here—as soon as the Pran leaves the body, the latter loses all signs of change. The erroneous notion that the creature had harboured that the body is his 'true self' is used here while referring to the body as the 'Jiva'. It has already been said in the first stanza that the Atma is restless and swift—i.e. it is ever changing and agile, an aphorism for having Kalaas.]

नभस्थं निष्कलं ध्यात्वा मुच्यते भवबन्धनात्
अनाहतध्वनियुतं हंसं यो वेद हृद्गतम् ॥ २०॥

nabhasthaṁ niṣkalaṁ dhyātvā mucyatē bhavabandhanāt
anāhatadhvanīyutaṁ haṁsaṁ yō vēda hṛdgatam ॥ 20॥

“Verse no. 20 = Such a man who contemplates about and meditates upon the enigmatic and eclectic divine entity that is subtly present in the sky element and which, like the sky, has no attributes and qualifications whatsoever is able to free himself from the fetters that shackle the creature to this world of attributes, qualities, characteristic features and qualifications. [That is, he becomes one like the supreme Brahm which has no attributes, qualities, characteristic features and qualifications. It is like the case of white light which contains all the seven colours of the rainbow but they remain hidden in its whiteness.]

A self-realised person hears the cosmic vibrations called ‘Anaahat Naad’¹, emanating in his heart from the divine entity in the form of a symbolic ‘Hansa’² (a Swan) present there (when it breathes; refer verse no. 16) (20).

[Note—¹Anahat/Anaahat Naad—The word *Anahat Naad* refers to the apparently self-created cosmic sound called ‘Naad’. It is called ‘Anahat’ because it was generated on its own without any apparent cause such as striking of two entities with one another which is the usual cause of generation of sound in this world. It resembles the distant rumbling of clouds or a train trundling along on its track. The Naad Bindu Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition describes this Naad in great detail. From the point of view of genesis according to the Tantra Shastra which believes that everything in existence originated from Shiva and Shakti (the cosmic male and female elements), a very interesting depiction is given as to how the cosmic Naad came into being and how the rest of creation was revealed from it. Its basic scene is as follows— According to the philosophy of Tantra Shastra dedicated to the worship of divinity in the form of Shiva and Shakti, the process of creation took the following initial steps. Before anything came into being, Brahm, the supreme consciousness and the ultimate truth of creation, known as Shiva, was established in his own radiant effulgence or self-illumination symbolising his splendorous glory, majesty and divinity. Hence he was called ‘Prakash’, literally meaning light. When he decided to deliberate and actually started the process of deliberation in order to start the process of creation, there was a subtle ‘spandan’ or a slight throb or imperceptible movement which transformed into a vibration. The waves generated by this initial vibration developed in the cosmic ether and gradually coalesced with each other to give rise to higher waves of higher amplitudes. This produced the cosmic sound called the Naad. Since the creation was conceived in the bowl of the cosmic ether, the energy of the initial sound was focused at a central point, called the focal point or the dot or ‘Bindu’. This Bindu contained the combined powers of both the male Shiva and the female Shakti like a dicotyledonous seed which produced the two separate entities called Shiva and Shakti. The union of these two resulted in the unfolding of the rest of the creation. Thus it will be observed that whatever exists in this creation can be traced back to this primeval Naad. Hence, the latter is called ‘Shabda Brahm’, or the Brahm as sound. Therefore it is very natural to assume that all Mantras dedicated to any divine entity and consisting of the sound element (because Mantra consist of letters and words, and are chanted or repeated to make them effective) has its origin in this Shabda Brahm and gets its powers and energy from this Shabda Brahm. In other words, the Mantra contains in itself the essential meaning, form and spirit of the deity whose Mantra it is and which is being worshipped and invoked. Constant repetition of the Mantra generates so much energy in

due course of time that the deity being worshipped is revealed. This is because the sound has great powers and energy as is evident when reverberation of sound waves and the resonance created by them are so powerful and forceful that they can shatter sheet glass in windows when an explosion occurs near a building.

Thus we observe that the Naad is the ethereal background reverberating sound energy in Nature which is said to be the primary source of energy that provided the vital spark to set off the chain reaction in the primordial cosmic gel from which the rest of the creation eventually evolved. The Naad has been envisioned in the form of waves in the cosmic ether, the waves which overlapped and coalesced with each other to generate sufficient energy that produces sound which traveled in the sky and was heard by ancient sages and seers who devised the word OM to capture its fundamental tones and notes in the constituent letters or syllables of this OM. Since the primordial cosmic gel was a neutral and static entity, this energy of sound waves was the first to create some sort of activity in it—like subtly and imperceptibly stirring it from within. This energy multiplies itself manifold and in due course of time the different elements separated from one another, the heavier ones settling at the bottom and the lighter ones going upwards to float on the surface. This is how basically the earth and other elements such as the water and air took up their places in creation, with the heavier earth solidifying at the lower level and the lighter water floating on its outer surface and the air going still higher into the space of the sky. The fire element however remained trapped in the bowls of the earth as the world gradually crystallised into its present shape.

The Naad was envisioned by ancient sages and seers as the cosmic sound having its genesis in the form of waves in the cosmic ether, the waves which overlapped and coalesced with each other to generate sufficient energy that produced the background sound which traveled in the sky and was heard by them during their meditative sessions which lasted for extended periods of time. Now once having heard it, they devised a word to encapsulate its fundamental notes and tones, and they came up with the word OM to capture the essential mode in which this cosmic Naad was heard by them. When they revealed this secret to their disciples, it was through the word OM, and they went on to analyse this sound and deciphered its components as the basic letters that constitute it, i.e. A, O, U and M. Refer to Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 6.

Since the primordial cosmic gel was a neutral and static entity, this energy generated by the sound waves was the first to create some sort of activity in it—like subtly and imperceptibly stirring it from within. This energy multiplied itself manifold and in due course of time the different elements present earlier in the homogenous cosmic gel separated from one another to give it a heterogeneous character, the heavier ones settling at the bottom and the lighter ones going upwards to float on the surface. While this process was progressing, the elements captured or soaked energy according to their capacity much like sponge soaks water or earth attracts anything by its gravitational pull.

This is how basically the earth and other elements such as the water and air took up their respective places in creation, with the heavier earth solidifying at the lower level and the lighter water floating on its outer surface and the air going still higher into the space of the sky. The fire element however required

a medium to hide itself in because the water and air were inimical to its existence; the water would douse it and the wind would blow it out of existence. Therefore it hid inside the bowls of the earth and entered subtly into things originating from earth. That is why it is present even under the vast reservoir of water known as the ocean, and at the same time lives subtly inside everything that grows on earth, such as food. The creator is so wise that he hid this tremendous source of life, energy and vitality in the earth because he knew that if life is to be made sustainable it would need a viable source of self-sustenance in the form of an inexhaustible source of energy. Finally, the grossest element known as the earth also solidified into its present shape.

Since the Atma is the only conscious factor in creation showing basic elements of the existence of life in any of its myriad forms, and the Naad is also the first sign of primordial activity in the cosmos, it naturally follows that the Atma, the 'soul or life' of all that exists in Nature, and the Naad, the primary source from which the entire creation is said to have evolved and derived its energy, are synonymous with each other. This fact has been endorsed by Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse 3 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition which says that the Atma is synonymous with the Naad. This cosmic Naad is still hearable when one closes one's ears when one hears the roaring sound of the blood flowing through the veins and arteries inside the body.

But the cosmic Consciousness called the Atma is not such an easy thing to understand, because the same Tejobindu immediately asserts in the following verse no. 4 of its Canto 5 that the Atma is even beyond the concept of Naad. It is because the Naad has been visualised in the form of the cosmic ethereal subtle sound heard when one pronounces the word OM. It is believed that it is from this OM that the rest of the creation has evolved, i.e. Naad and OM have some 'beginning', no matter how ancient and primary. On the contrary, the Atma is said to be 'eternal and infinite, having no beginning and end, and even outlasting the end of the present creation and preceding the next one'. The Atma is the eternal cosmic consciousness which initiates the process of creation, and hence of Naad in the first place. It's not the other way round.

In order to understand the genesis of creation in terms of Naad, this cosmic sound represented by the word OM has been broken up in its constituent sound elements represented by the various letters and syllables such as A, U, O and M. These alphabets symbolise the basic forms in which sound representing cosmic energy in its most fundamental and basic form exists in this creation. Then each unit is further analysed and assigned symbolisms—such as the letter 'A' for example was envisioned to represent the appearance of the first signs of creation, the letters 'U' and 'O' for its evolvment, development, expansion and growth, and 'M' for its conclusion. Then a geometrical symbol was devised to physically depict this word OM, and it is 'ॐ'.

Sound has its own classifications which are used in the field of learning music. But the Atma is such a unique and magnificent entity that even though it has been said that it is like the cosmic sound called the Naad in this Upanishad's verse no. 3 as stated above, but it is only to emphasise the fact that like the Naad it too is a cosmic and enigmatic phenomenon, but this observation should not be treated too literally because the Atma is much superior to the Naad and does not qualify to be treated at par with any physical phenomenon like the Naad. The Naad is actually (physically) heard by ascetics

who have risen above certain level in their meditation much like the Atma which is also experienced and witnessed by all spiritually enlightened aspirants.

But the comparison ends there, for the Atma cannot be analysed and classified and mastered like the sound element is done by an expert musician who can fiddle and play around with it to create masterpieces of music, or by teachers of metaphysics and theology who try to explain the complex phenomenon of creation by using the word OM as some model in a science laboratory.

The Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 5, verse no. 2 asserts that the *Naad* is a manifestation of the cosmic Consciousness. The Hanso-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 16-17 describes the sound emanating from this Naad, while verse no. 18-20 describes its effect on the body. Refer also to Mandal Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 2; Dhyān Bindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition in its verse no. 2-3, 37 and 102.

²The ‘Hansa’ is the swan used as a metaphor for the pure consciousness living inside the subtle heart, and the Anaahat Naad is the sound that is heard when this swan breathes. This concept has been elaborately explained in the Hanso-panishad belonging to the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition amongst other Upanishads.]

स्वपूकाशचिदानन्दं स हंस इति गीयते ।
रेचकं पूरकं मुक्त्वा कुम्भकेन स्थितः सुधीः ॥ २१॥
नाभिकन्दे समौ कृत्वा प्राणापानौ समाहितः ।
मस्तकस्थामृतास्वादं पीत्वा ध्यानेन सादरम् ॥ २२॥

svaprakāśacidānandaṁ sa haṁsa iti gīyatē ।
rēcakaṁ pūrakaṁ muktvā kumbhakēna sthitaḥ sudhīḥ ॥ 21॥
nābhikandē samau kṛtvā prāṇāpānau samāhitaḥ ।
mastakasthāmṛtāsvādaṁ pītvā dhyānēna sādaram ॥ 22॥

“Verse no. 21-22 = This pure consciousness, which is likened to a divine Hansa or Swan, is eternally blissful and self-illuminated. A wise and erudite person who is able to go beyond the two phases of breathing process called Rechak and Purak (exhalation and inhalation respectively), and instead hold the breath inside the body as done during the Kumbhak phase of meditation exercises called Pranayam, is able to merge the two vital winds called Pran and Apaana in the region of the Naabhi Kand (i.e. in the region of the navel)¹.

Consequently, he becomes so focused and concentrated in hearing this Anaahat Naad reverberating around him as he becomes completely engrossed in drinking the nectar-like elixir of bliss and spiritual ecstasy called Amrit dripping from the subtle sky located in his head² (21-22).

[Note--¹The word Rechak refers to elimination or purging and hence stands for the Apaana wind, while Purak refers to filling and hence it refers to Pran wind or breath which fills the body with oxygen and life. When an ascetic stops breathing, it is obvious that these two forms of winds would mix with one another as there are no water-tight compartments in the body to separate them. Now where is it done? This is answered here—‘in the region of the navel’. This is because when the breath is held, the abdomen acts like the pitcher in which the air is filled. The navel is the metaphoric center of this pitcher-like abdomen, hence the symbolism. All the Upanishads dealing with Yoga describe how these two winds are mixed by doing Pranayam.

²The is a remarkable observation. The reverberating humming heard by the ascetic is like the humming of the honey bee, and the dripping of the nectar from the head is like the dripping of the honey from the honeycomb hanging high up as symbolised by its presence in the head. The divine swan is the Atma as the pure conscious ‘self’ of the man, and the Naad heard is the resonating sound that is heard by ascetics when they meditate upon OM. This can be practically heard by an ordinary man also and its process has been elaborately described in Upanishads dealing with Yoga.

In practical terms this verse means that when a spiritual aspirant practices Pranayam, he is able to bring together the vital winds in the body, such as the Pran and the Apaana. Hitherto they had different directions of movements—for while the Pran was located in the upper part of the body in the lungs and nostrils and moved upwards, the Apaana was located in the intestines and moved downwards. Due to Pranayam and the closure of the body’s apertures called the ‘nine doors of the body’, all the vital winds present inside the body get mixed and their energy is coordinated to help the aspirant achieve the spiritual high of extreme bliss and ecstasy. The incarcerated wind gets heated and agitated while it violently swirls inside the abdomen, dashing with each other and gaining in energy and heat. This helps to build up the pressure inside the body and the vibrations caused by these clashing winds build up to reach a crescendo that is heard as the reverberating Naad in the head in the form of a resonating buzz or hum. This is aided and compounded by the constant chanting of the Mantra OM. The resultant effect is an overlapping of waves and compounding of frequencies which have an astounding affect on the nerves of the practitioner of Yoga and he experiences an extreme sense of bliss and ecstasy.

This phenomenon is metaphorically depicted in the form of dripping drops of Amrit from a pitcher held aloft in the head much like the honey is squeezed from a full honeycomb dangling from the branch of a tree. The ‘squeezing’ here is done by the pressure of the heated and energized vital winds of the body. In fact, the nerves are massaged and titillated to such an extreme level that the practitioner experiences only exhilaration to the exclusion of all other types of sensory perception such as pain and worries that had been tormenting him till this exalted state is reached. He does not want to revert back to his earlier time of miseries and wishes to put it behind him. This is a symbolic way of saying that he has found the eternal fountain of bliss and happiness through the practice of Yoga.]

दीपाकारं महादेवं ज्वलन्तं नाभिमध्यमे ।
 अभिषिच्यामृतेनैव हंस हंसेति यो जपेत् ॥ २३॥
 जरामरणरोगादि न तस्य भुवि विद्यते ।
 एवं दिने दिने कुर्यादणिमादिविभूतये ॥ २४॥

dīpākāraṁ mahādēvaṁ jvalantaṁ nābhimadhyamē ।
 abhiṣicyāmṛtēnaiva haṁsa haṁsēti yō japēt ॥ 23॥
 jarāmaraṇarōgādi na tasya bhuvi vidyatē ।
 ēvaṁ dinē dinē kuryādaṇimādivibhūtayē ॥ 24॥

“Verse no. 23-24 = Those wise ones who symbolically pour a stream of this elixir on the divine deity called Mahaadeva (literally the ‘great God’ or Lord Shiva), located in the region of the navel and whose form is like a lighted lamp, while doing Japa with the Mantra ‘Hansa-Hansa’¹ are blessed with being free from various diseases such as the degenerating effects of old age culminating into death. [That is, such a man acquires robust health and maintains it even in his old age; he dies peacefully without having to undergo the usual torments associated with old age and death.]

He is also becomes eligible to acquire the various mystical powers called Siddhis² such as Anima etc. [That is, he acquires special powers by preserving his vital energy, stamina and vitality.] (23-24).

[Note—¹The word *Hansa* has two components—Ha + Sa. It comes by reversing the great saying ‘So-a-Ham’ meaning ‘that essence or truth is me’. So when the self-realised man repeats this Mantra, he is in effect asserting that he has realised who he actually is. He affirms that he is not an ordinary man with the body, but that divine Being known as the Brahm who resides in his heart as the pure consciousness or Atma. The bird swan is chosen to represent him because this bird is deemed to be very pure and selective in what it accepts and what it rejects. It is known to select pearls from an assortment of gems, and drink milk and leave its water content. Similarly, the wise man is expected to pick the truth from amongst the basket of assorted charms present in this creation and leave aside the non-truths.

²The *Siddhis*—The word Siddhi refers to various mystical and occult powers that a spiritual aspirant acquires as a result of certain ritualistic practices.

There are eight Siddhis which are divine mystical powers which enables the person to accomplishment astounding feats. They are the following— (i) ‘Anima’ means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; (ii) ‘Mahima’ is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one’s achievements, knowledge and skills; (iii) ‘Garima’ is to have weight, stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance, (iv) ‘Laghima’ is to have simplicity and humility; (v) ‘Praapti’ is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired; (vi) ‘Prakramya’ is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) ‘Ishwatwa’ is to be able to have lordship or sway over others; and (viii) ‘Vashitwa’ is to be able to control and subdue others.

The Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 151-155 classifies all Siddhis into two categories—Kalpit and A-Kalpit. The Kalpit Siddhis are the ones which are created with efforts made for them using various means and methods. They have a limited scope, are perishable, and have imaginable powers and potentials that can be predicted. On the other hand, the A-Kalpit Siddhis are those which are self-generated or uncreated by any artificial means, are natural and with unimaginable mystical potentials and powers that cannot be predicted.

Refer also to Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 46-55 and Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 56-102.]

ईश्वरत्वमवाप्नोति सदाभ्यासरतः पुमान् ।
बहवो नैकमार्गेण प्राप्ता नित्यत्वमागताः ॥ २५॥

īśvaratvamavāpnōti sadābhyāsarataḥ pumān ।
bahavō naikamārgēṇa prāptā nityatvamāgatāḥ ॥ 25॥

“Verse no. 25 = A wise and enlightened man who is constantly involved in pursuing this spiritual path of Brahm-realisation is indeed able to attain the exalted stature of the supreme Lord known as Ishwar. In other words, he becomes one with Ishwar. There are a number of enlightened people who have successfully done this (25).

हंसविद्यामृते लोके नास्ति नित्यत्वसाधनम् ।
यो ददाति महाविद्यां हंसाख्यां पारमेश्वरीम् ॥ २६॥
तस्य दास्यं सदा कुर्यात्पूजया परया सह ।
शुभं वाऽशुभमन्यद्वा यदुक्तं गुरुणा भुवि ॥ २७॥
तत्कुर्यादविचारेण शिष्यः सन्तोषसंयुतः ।
हंसविद्यामिमां लब्ध्वा गुरुशुश्रूषया नरः ॥ २८॥

haṁsavidyāmṛtē lōkē nāsti nityatvasāadhanam ।
yō dadāti mahāvidyāṁ haṁsākhyāṁ pāramēśvarīm ॥ 26॥
tasya dāsyam sadā kuryātprajñayā parayā saha ।
śubham vā'śubhamanyadvā yaduktaṁ guruṇā bhuvi ॥ 27॥
tatkuryādavicārēṇa śiṣyaḥ santōṣasaṁyutaḥ ।
haṁsavidyāmimāṁ labdhvā guruśuśrūṣayā naraḥ ॥ 28॥

“Verse no. 26-28 = There is no other way to spiritual eternity and attainment of an exalted stature of being one with the supreme Brahm except following this path known as ‘Hansa Vidya’ (as described in the forgoing verses). Any wise and enlightened man who imparts this great, eclectic, most magnificent and holy spiritual knowledge called Hansa Vidya to an eager seeker should be duly respected, honoured

and served by all. Whatever good or bad (acceptable or unacceptable, liked or disliked, compatible or incompatible, pleasant or unpleasant, comfortable or uncomfortable, reasonable or unreasonable) instructions that such an exalted Guru (teacher) gives to his disciples should always be obeyed by the latter without raising any questions and in a calm manner. [Obviously, such a wise and enlightened teacher would not give instructions that would harm the self-interest of the disciple or would violate the codes of conduct which deal with righteousness and auspiciousness.]

One should accept this eclectic knowledge from the wise teacher and then ensure that the teacher is served to the best of his abilities. [This is because such knowledge is hard to come by, and there are few enlightened souls who would be willing to impart it to others. This knowledge is like the gem amongst the entire body of spiritual knowledge that is available to a man; this knowledge is so precious and priceless that no material wealth in this world can weigh even a fraction of its importance. Therefore, the recipient of this knowledge has a moral obligation towards his Guru, and this obligation is so great and binding upon him that he inspite of his serving the teacher with the best of his ability and with full sincerity he would still be indebted to his teacher; he would still feel that he could have done more if given a chance.] (26-28).

हंसहंसेति यो ब्रूयाद्धंसो ब्रह्मा हरिः शिवः ।
गुरुवक्त्रात् लभ्येत प्रत्यक्षं सर्वतोमुखम् ॥ ३४॥

haṁsahaṁsēti yō brūyāddhaṁsō brahmā hariḥ śivaḥ ।
guruvaktrāttu labhyēta pratyakṣaṁ sarvatōmukham ॥ 34॥

“Verse no. 34 = A wise and enlightened man who remains engrossed in repeating the eclectic and divine Mantra ‘Hansa-Hansa’ (i.e. ‘So-a-Ham’ meaning ‘that essence or Truth or Brahm is me’) is indeed an auspicious personification of the Trinity Gods, i.e. of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder. He can be successful, by the grace and blessing of his enlightened Guru, in becoming aware or realising the ubiquitous supreme Brahm who all-pervading, all-encompassing and all-incorporating (34).

प्राणिनां देहमध्ये तु स्थितो हंसः सदाच्युतः ।
हंस एव परं सत्यं हंस एव तु शक्तिकम् ॥ ६०॥

prāṇināṁ dēhamadhyē tu sthitō haṁsaḥ sadācyutaḥ ।
haṁsa ēva paraṁ satyaṁ haṁsa ēva tu śaktikam ॥ 60॥

“Verse no. 60 = In the body of all living beings, the imperishable and eternal Divinity is always present in the form of the ‘Hansa’ (i.e. in the form of the divine Swan symbolising the pure consciousness or Atma present in the creature).

This Hansa (i.e. the pure conscious Atma) is the ultimate Truth, and this Hansa is an embodiment of divine Shakti (powers, energy, vitality, prowess and strength) that is present in any creature. [In other words, without this Hansa or Atma the body would be lifeless and would not show any of the signs of life, vitality, prowess and strengths that it is famous for and known to exhibit. It would be like a lump of dead flesh.] (60).

हंस एव परं वाक्यं हंस एव तु वादिकम् ।
हंस एव परो रुद्रो हंस एव परात्परम् ॥ ६१॥

haṁsa ēva paraṁ vākyam haṁsa ēva tu vādikam ।
haṁsa ēva parō rudrō haṁsa ēva parātparam ॥ 61॥

“Verse no. 61 = This word ‘Hansa’ is the great saying of the Vedas; it is the maxim and axiom proclaimed by the Vedas; it is the assertion of the Vedas.

This Hansa is Rudra (Lord Shiva) personified, and it is the Supreme Being himself (61).

[Note—The word ‘Hansa’ here refers to the eclectic Mantra ‘So-a-Ham, meaning ‘I am that essence’, or more elaborately ‘I, in my truthful form as the pure consciousness known as the Atma, am that essence known as Brahm that is symbolized by the bird Hansa’, or ‘I and Brahm are one, and both are represented by the divine bird Hansa/Swan’. Here the word ‘I’ refers to the Atma or pure consciousness. The Vedas endeavour to enlighten a person about his true ‘self’ and remove ignorance from his mental horizon. They preach the Truth of existence, about who the aspirant actually is, what is the true goal of life, how to reach it, how to get rid of miseries and problems of life and find permanent deliverance from them, how to obtain happiness and bliss that is permanent and best etc. When the spiritual aspirant discovers to his astonishment that the exalted stature that is obtainable by doing elaborate fire sacrifices and other religious rituals is easily obtainable by him by turning inwards, by meditation and contemplation that lead to him discovering his own divinity and holiness in the form of the Atma, he exults in joy and spontaneous ecstasy. He would literally dance in joy at having discovered a pitcher of eternal happiness and peace hidden inside his own bosom rather than somewhere outside.]

सर्वदेवस्य मध्यस्थो हंस एव महेश्वरः ।
पृथिव्यादिशिवान्तं तु अकाराद्याश्च वर्णकाः ॥ ६२॥
कूटान्ता हंस एव स्यान्मातृकेति व्यवस्थिताः ।
मातृकारहितं मन्त्रमादिशन्ते न कुत्रचित् ॥ ६३॥

sarvadēvasya madhyasthō haṁsa ēva mahēśvaraḥ ।
 pṛthivyādiśivāntaṁ tu akārādyāśca varṇakāḥ ॥ 62॥
 kūṭāntā haṁsa ēva syānmāṭrkēti vyavasthitāḥ ।
 māṭrkārahitaṁ mantramādiśantē na kutracit ॥ 63॥

“Verse no. 62-63 = Amongst all the Gods, the Hansa is the most exalted God called Maheshwar. Right from any point on the earth to the far reaches of the infinite directions, right from the first letter of the Sanskrit language, i.e. the letter ‘A’ (implying the beginning of creation) and extending to the last letter ‘Ksha’ (indicating conclusion of the creation, because the word ‘Ksha’ stands for decay and ruin)—it is the same Hansa representing the pure consciousness, the ultimate Truth and the supreme Brahm that pervades throughout the creation represented symbolically by the alphabets of the language.

Nowhere is any Mantra (which is an esoteric and mystical group of letters or words or phrases used to worship or pay tributes to a deity) preached or nowhere does it have any meaning or even an existence if there is no Maatrikaa¹ in it (62-63).

[Note—¹The *Maatrikaa* of a Mantra are the various Sanskrit letters or alphabets that collectively form the text of the Mantra. The word Maatrikaa literally means ‘a little mother’. Since the Mantra represents the cosmic divinity known as the supreme transcendental Brahm in its numerous manifestations known as various Gods, the letters are called the Maatrikaas because they empower this Mantra with the stupendous mystical powers that this Mantra possesses much like Brahm employing his cosmic dynamic energy to enable him to initiate and then sustain and develop this creation, and even bring about its conclusion.

Brahm initiated this creation with the help of his cosmic dynamic powers and energy represented and encrypted in the Beej Mantra. But as it happened, the unfolded creation had numerous Gods and Goddesses. These Gods actually symbolise the various aspects of Brahm’s cosmic powers and authority, and the Goddesses represent their empowerment and strength to give effect to their mandate. This is a classic case of delegation of authority.

Mere letters and words or phrases of the Mantra would be neutral if not given their powers, or if they are not ‘empowered’ and ‘enabled’ much like Brahm which was a neutral entity until it empowered and armed itself with the cosmic dynamic energy, the necessary strength and authority to enable itself to initiate the process of creation. So, the Maatrikaa or Beej Mantras are the empowering aspect of the main body of the Mantra.

Each Mantra has two components—subtle and gross. The subtle part is its ‘Beej Mantra’ which is like the seed from where the huge tree grows. The gross part is the larger and extended part of the Mantra having a number of letters or words or phrases. The Beej Mantra consists of a consonant and the vowel sound attached to it with a dot on top to indicate its point-source of cosmic energy as well as to indicate its anointment as the chief component of the Mantra. The dot is called the Anuswar, and it produces the nasal sound in association with the vowel sign preceding it. For example, in the Mantra ‘Hansa’ as described in the Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 62-63, the Beej Mantra is the Sanskrit consonant ‘Ha’ + the vowel sound of the letter ‘A’ with a dot on top—producing the sound equivalent of ‘hunt + suns or sons’ =

‘Hansa’. Since this word ‘Hansa’ refers to the cosmic transcendental supreme Brahm and its counterpart as the Atma or pure consciousness present in the body of an individual creature, the letter ‘Ha’ represents Brahm, while the letter ‘Sa’, which is a sibilant sound following the main Beej Mantra, means ‘like that’ or ‘like it’ referring to the Atma because the Atma is ‘like that Brahm’.

The Beej Mantra is like the ‘seed or root’ from which the rest of the Mantra evolves and is said to derive its mystical and stupendous powers and potentials. This Beej Mantra is like the seed having the tree secretly present in it, and the Mantra would then be like the fully grown-up tree. Even when grown, the tree needs the root to anchor it and derive its nourishment from the ground. Hence the two epithets ‘seed’ and ‘root’ used to describe the Beej Mantra. Each deity has a specific Beej Mantra dedicated to it, and one Beej Mantra may apply to more than one deity.

In Hinduism, meditation and contemplation upon a chosen deity is done by the help of a Mantra as a specific formula dedicated to invoke its powers as well as to concentrate the mind and its various faculties on the deity along with aiding the process of meditation and contemplation. This is done by doing Japa which involves repetition of the given Mantra. In fact, Japa is an integral part of any religious exercise, even for success in Yoga because it helps to harness the latent and dormant energy in the body by focusing the mind on the purpose at hand. The Beej Mantra is used for its concentrated energy and strength alongside its ease of use and usefulness in offering oblations or doing Anga Nyas (which is establishing the divine powers of the deity on the different parts of the body to purify them, empower them and strengthen them with dynamic energy and holiness associated with the Mantra).

In metaphysics, the supreme Brahm is the deity worshipped, and his Manta is OM which is a monosyllabic word. The Brahm Vidya Upanishad however describes the Mantra as ‘Hansa’ because it refers to the pure consciousness called the Atma as a manifestation of Brahm in the body of the individual creature, and repetition of this Mantra is like establishing a union between the two of them and reminding the spiritual aspirant that his ‘true self’ is the Atma which is none other than the Supreme Being known as Brahm. That is why there are a number of Yoga Upanishads that extol the virtues of this Hansa Mantra during the process of various meditation and contemplation exercises.

The single point source of everything in existence is indisputably Brahm represented by the Beej Mantra. If the letter of the Beej Mantra represents this Brahm, then the dot and the vowel sign of the Beej Mantra are like the dynamic powers, energy and authority of Brahm. The extended part of the Mantra would then be equivalent to the revelation of Brahm in the form of myriad Gods representing one or the other virtues and qualities of Brahm, and their divine counterparts called the various Goddesses would represent the powers and authority vested in these Gods by the supreme Authority so that they can carry out their assigned duties.

In Tantra form of occult worship, the Supreme Being is worshipped as a divine cosmic Shakti or cosmic Mother which is actually the cosmic powers and dynamic energy of the supreme Brahm that is responsible for the creation coming into being, its development, growth and sustenance, and is even responsible for its conclusion. If the Supreme Being is regarded as the cosmic

Male, then the opposite force, the cosmic Female, is envisioned as the Shakti, or the dynamic energy and vital powers, potentials and authority of this Supreme Being. The cosmic Male provided the vital spark of life in the form of the cosmic Consciousness which is like the 'sperm', while the cosmic Shakti is the female counter-part, called the 'Prakriti' which received this 'sperm' and nourished it in its womb to produce the offspring in the form of this vast creation. It was in the Prakriti's womb that the creation was conceived, developed and grew to emerge as the mysterious creation which is as mystical and enigmatic as its father, the Supreme Being. Obviously, the cosmic sperm would have been wasted if it was not accepted by the comic Mother known as Prakriti.

In Tantra philosophy, the Supreme Being is known as Mahadeva or Shiva, and the female part or Shakti is known as Uma or Parvati. In the language of the Upanishads or Vedanta, the same Supreme Being is known as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm from which the entire creation sprouted like the tree from a seed, and the cosmic Shakti is called Maya or Prakriti. The Maya is nothing but the Viraat Purush's dynamic powers that brought about the beginning of creation, sustains it and would finally conclude it; the Prakriti is the womb where the creation conceived and developed. The embryo is the Hiranyagarbha which is the subtle body of Brahm, and this embryo developed and revealed the Viraat Purush.

So, if the given Mantra is regarded as a personification of the given deity, then the Maatrikaa would be its energy and dynamism that is latent and inherent in it. The Mantra would lose its powers and potentials in the absence of the Maatrikaa just like the Supreme Being needed the power of the Shakti to create the world.

The word Maatrikaa literally means a 'little mother'. It is given the same reverence that one would give to a mother because it is the mother that gives shape to the body of the offspring—in this case the main body of the Mantra. Shorn of the Maatrikaa, the Mantra would be meaningless and powerless.

The Beejnighantu text (Beej = seed Mantra; Nighantu = dictionary) written by Bhairav lists 50 such Beej Mantras and describes what they stand for. Another text known as Beej-vidhaan has 75 lines in the poetical style called the Anushtup Chanda describing the Beej Mantras like Hrim, Strim, Aim, Krim etc. representing different deities such as Aindri, Vaamekshana, Saraswati, Kali etc. respectively. Similarly, the Ekakhar-kosha of Purshottamadeva lists the Beej Mantras of various Gods and Goddesses, such as 'A' for Vasudeo, 'Aa' for Pitaamaha (Brahma the creator of the visible world), 'Pa' for the Wind God called Pawan, 'Saa' for Laxmi the goddess of wealth as well as for Shiva the third God of the Trinity. Another text called Mantraarthaa-bhidaan by Varadaatantra also lists the Beej Mantra such as 'Haum' for Shiva, 'Dum' for Goddess Durga, 'Krim' for Goddess Kalikaa, 'Hrim' for Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, 'Klim' for Kaamdeo-cupid, the patron god of love and passion, 'Gam' for Ganesh, 'Kshraum' for Narshingh, the half-lion and half-man incarnation of Vishnu, etc. According to Maatrikaanighantu by Mahidas, the Beej Mantras and even the word Mantras of certain chief deities are as follows—'A' stands for Shrikantha (Shiva, the one with a blue-tinged throat), 'Keshava' for Krishna, 'Vaata' for the Wind God of Pawan, 'Ka' for Maya, 'Ma' stands both for Vaikuntha, the abode for

Lord Vishnu who is the second of the Trinity Gods and is responsible for sustenance of creation, as well as for Mahaakaal, one of the names of Shiva, 'Ya' stands for Yamuna etc.

The Brahm Vidya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 63 asserts that no Mantra has any value if there is no Maatrikaa in it. To quote—"Nowhere is any Mantra (which is an esoteric and mystical group of letters or words or phrases used to worship or pay tributes to a deity) preached or nowhere does it have any meaning, value or even an existence if there is no Maatrikaa in it (63)."]

हंसज्योतिरनूपम्यं मध्ये देवं व्यवस्थितम् ।
दक्षिणामुखमाश्रित्य ज्ञानमुद्रां प्रकल्पयेत् ॥ ६४॥

haṁsajyōtiranūpamyam madhyē dēvam vyavasthitam ।
dakṣiṇāmukhamāśritya jñānamudrām prakalpayēt ॥ 64॥

"Verse no. 64 = The magnificent splendour and the stupendous glory of this divine Hansa (i.e. the pure conscious Atma or the supreme Brahm) are central to all the eclectic virtues and glories that all the honourable Gods in creation possess. This Hansa occupies an exalted stature amidst the Gods and is the focal point around which all the Gods of this creation exist¹.

The aspirant should meditate in the Gyan Mudra while remembering Lord Shiva in his 'Dakshin Mukhi' form² (64).

[Note—¹That is, this divine, self-illuminated and glorious entity is seated like an Emperor surrounded by all the Gods as his attendants. This is a figure of speech to emphasise the following points—(a) All the Gods derive their powers and strengths on the authority of the supreme Brahm who is central to their existence. (b) Brahm is at the center of the entire creation much like the hub of a wheel, and all the different Gods and Goddesses represent the different attributes, virtues and qualities of Brahm. They have spread out like the branches of a tree, and if the tree is not there these branches would also not be there. (c) These Gods owe their existence, powers, strength, authority and virtues as well as their importance, value and significance to one single point source called Brahm. They revolve around this central axis just like the planets do around the sun. (d) If Brahm is the seed, the Gods are the huge colourful tree with multifarious shape and size. This is the picture at the macrocosmic level. At the micro level of creation, the creature is a representative of the cosmos, while his Atma which is pure consciousness and his 'true self' is the central point of his existence because without the Atma his existence is not feasible. The various Gods represent the different functions of the body and they therefore reside in the respective organ carrying out those functions. That is why the Hansa—the aphorism for this Atma—is central to the Gods because without the Atma the body and its Gods would be meaningless.

²The *Gyan Mudra* in relation with the word Dakshin Mukhi refers to the sitting posture adopted by Lord Shiva while he meditated facing south. It also

might mean ‘with a bowed head’ because the word Dakshin in Sanskrit means downward facing. In ritualistic forms of worship, this direction is the location of Yam God, the god of death whose controller is Shiva. The word Yam also means self control and self restraint. Hence, meditating with total self control and restraint over the restless organs of the body is called Gyan Mudra with a Dakshin Mukhi dimension.

An entire Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is dedicated to this south-facing form of Shiva, and it is called ‘Dakshin Murti Upanishad’.]

सदा समाधिं कुर्वीत हंसमन्त्रमनुस्मरन् ।
निर्मलस्फटिकाकारं दिव्यरूपमनुत्तमम् ॥ ६५॥

sadā samādhim kurvīta haṁsamāntramānusmaran ।
nirmalasphaṭikākāraṁ divyarūpamanuttamam ॥ 65॥

“Verse no. 65 = The spiritual aspirant should remain established in a perpetual state of Samadhi which is a trance-like state of blissfulness and eternal ecstasy. He should remain contemplative and meditative while in this state. This would create an aura of divinity around him which would shine and glow like the light emanating from a piece of crystal (65).

[Note—The enlightened spiritual aspirant is compared to a crystal because he is as pure and untainted as the latter. The crystal has no light of its own but shines due to reflection and refraction of light that falls on its surface. Similarly, the aspirant physical body has no light of its own but it reflects the inner light of holiness and divinity of the Atma that shines through his inner self as well as the light of wisdom, enlightenment and knowledge that he possesses. The divine glow around him indicates the purity of his self and the fact that this purity enables the glow of Brahm to be reflected from him. Since light is reflected in all its purity from a clean surface, and gets faint when reflected from a dirty or tainted surface, the fact that the aspirant is uncorrupt and holy shows in the glow of divinity around him. Again, only a plain mirror without any surface distortions would reflect perfect light, the holy and self-realised aspirant reflects the entire divinity and glory of Brahm without distorting it. In fact, this is the reason why it is said that a self-realised person is Brahm personified because he is a perfect image of what Brahm has been visualised to be.]

मध्यदेशे परं हंसं ज्ञानमुद्रात्मरूपकम् ।
प्राणोऽपानः समानश्चोदानव्यानौ च वायवः ॥ ६६॥
पञ्चकर्मेन्द्रियैरुक्ताः क्रियाशक्तिबलोद्यताः ।
नागः कूर्मश्च कृकरो देवदत्तो धनञ्जयः ॥ ६७॥
पञ्चज्ञानेन्द्रियैरुक्ता ज्ञानशक्तिबलोद्यताः ।
पावकः शक्तिमध्ये तु नाभिचक्रे रविः स्थितः ॥ ६८॥

madhyadēśē param haṁsaṁ jñānamudrātmarūpakam ।
 prāṇō'pānaḥ samānaścōdānavyānau ca vāyavaḥ ॥ 66॥
 pañcakarmēndriyairuktāḥ kriyāśaktibalōdyatāḥ ।
 nāgaḥ kūrmaśca kṛkarō dēvadattō dhanañjayaḥ ॥ 67॥
 pañcajñānēndriyairyuktā jñānaśaktibalōdyatāḥ ।
 pāvakaḥ śaktimadhyē tu nābhicakrē raviḥ sthitaḥ ॥ 68॥

“Verse nos. 66-68 = The aspirant should always contemplate upon this divine Hans (Swan) honourably enshrined in the central part of his body, i.e. in his subtle heart.

The meditation that is done using the five principal vital winds such as Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Vyan, along with their coordination with the five organs of actions of the body (such as hands, legs, mouth, genitals and excretory) is said to be very effective.

If this coordination between the five organs of action and the vital winds is extended to include the other minor vital winds such as Naaga, Kurma, Krikal, Devdutta and Dhananjay, then the results are simply astounding, they are extremely effective.

The Shakti is the center in the body where, as its name suggests, the subtle fire element and the dynamic energy of creation are located. [This ‘Shakti’ is the center of subtle energy in the body, which is the coil like Kundalini located at the base of the spine.] On the other hand, the energy of the Sun is symbolically located in the Naabhi Chakra (which is the subtle energy center located in the region of the navel) (66-68).

दृश्यन्तं दिव्यरूपेण सर्वव्यापी निरञ्जनः ।
 हंस हंस वदेद्वाक्यं प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।
 सप्राणापानयोर्गन्धिरजपेत्यभिधीयते ॥ ७८॥
 सहस्रमेकं द्युतं षट्शतं चैव सर्वदा ।
 उच्चरन्पठितो हंसः सोऽहमित्यभिधीयते ॥ ७९॥

dr̥śyantam divyarūpēṇa sarvavyāpī nirañjanaḥ ।
 haṁsa haṁsa vadēdvākyaṁ prāṇinām dēhamāśritaḥ ।
 saprāṇāpānayōrgranthirajapētyabhidhīyatē ॥ 78॥
 sahasramēkaṁ dvayutaṁ ṣaṭśataṁ caiva sarvadā ।
 uccaranpaṭhitō haṁsaḥ sō'hamityabhidhīyatē ॥ 79॥

“Verse no. 78-79 = All spiritual aspirants who have a gross body (and of course are wise and enlightened) should constantly contemplate upon and visualise the ubiquitous presence of the supreme Lord who is faultless and immaculate, who is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent in this creation. While doing this, he should constantly repeat the divine eclectic Mantra ‘Hansa-Hansa’. [In other words, the aspirant should constantly remind himself that he is no one else but the supreme Brahm himself personified. This is because another form of the Mantra is ‘So-a-Ham’, meaning ‘that is me’. Refer verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64.]

This type of Japa (repetition of the Mantra) done constantly and involuntarily is called ‘A-Japa Japa’, i.e. repetition of the Mantra in an involuntarily way and without being consciously aware of it being done at all¹.

This type of Japa involves a coordination of the Pran and Apaana winds. [This is because inhalation of breath during the Purak phase is known as the Pran, while the exhalation that is done during the Rechak phase is called Apaana.] Since a man breathes roughly twenty one thousands time during the course of a day, this is the number of times this Mantra ‘So-a-Ham’² is automatically repeated (78-79).

[Note—¹It is called ‘A-Japa Japa’ because this repetition is done involuntarily and without any special effort or attention paid to its repetition. The practitioner is not even aware that he is repeating any Mantra because it is directly linked to the normal breathing process which is an involuntary and an automatic biological process done constantly and without break, even while a person sleeps or goes about his daily chores of life—refer verse no. 16 and its note. The prefix ‘A’ indicates negation, and therefore this repetition of the Mantra Hansa is not regarded as doing a Japa in the conventional sense when special attention is focused on repeating any Mantra during some religious ritual or practicing Yoga. It is automatic and involuntary. So when the spiritual aspirant has risen to a level of awareness and enlightenment when he becomes aware of the spiritual importance of each breath that comes in and goes out of his body as representing the two limbs of the Mantra for Brahm, i.e. the letters ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ or the combined word ‘Hansa’, he is deemed to have become Brahm-realised. Only then can he say that he is repeating the Mantra ‘So-a-Ham’ meaning ‘that Brahm is me as my true self known as the pure consciousness or Atma’.

²The eclectic Mantra ‘So-a-Ham’ has been described in a number of Upanishads. For instance, Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-133; Shuk-Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 20; Sam Veda’s Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 83.]”

पूर्वभागे ह्यधोलिङ्गं शिखिन्यां चैव पश्चिमम् ।
ज्योतिर्लिङ्गं भ्रुवोर्मध्ये नित्यं ध्यायेत्सदा यतिः ॥ ८०॥

pūrvabhāgē hyadhōliṅgaṁ śikhinyāṁ caiva paścimam ।
jyōtirliṅgaṁ bhruvōrmadhyē nityaṁ dhyāyētsadā yatih ॥ 80॥

“Verse no. 80= The practitioner of Yoga should always meditate upon the symbol of Lord Shiva, called a Lingam, at three places—viz. as a ‘Adho-linga’ (i.e. as an inverted or downward facing Lingam) in the front of the Kundalini¹, as ‘Pashim Linga’ (i.e. as a Lingam facing to the west direction, or to the left hand side, or one that is rear-facing) at the place where the subtle filament of light burns in the body (i.e. in the heart region, because it is here the flame of consciousness burns as the Atma), and as the ‘Jyoti Linga’ (i.e. as a self-illuminated source of light) in the middle point of the eyebrows (which is said to be the site of the third eye of enlightenment and wisdom) (80).

[Note—Refer Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 168; Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11 which describe the presence of the Shiva's Lingam—the symbol representing Lord Shiva—in the body of the man in the course of discussing Yoga.]

[Verse nos. 81-110 are the truthful statements made by a self-realised person who has discovered the great spiritual Truth about himself. It must be noted here that the pronoun 'I' that is constantly used in each verse is not being used for the body but for the Atma or pure consciousness that is the true and real identity of the spiritual aspirant who is making each statement. The observations made in the following verses have an excellent resonance in other great Upanishads belonging to the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—such as the Tejo Bindu Upanishad in its full Canto 3 and in Canto 4, verse nos. 1-30, Canto 6, verse nos. 32-39, 58-72, as well as in Sarvasaar Upanishad, verse nos. 16-21. The statements made herein below mark the pinnacle of enlightenment and realisation of the ultimate Truth that inspires the spiritual aspirant to feel so exulted and ecstatic that he is unable to withhold his sense of elation at this discovery, and become so overjoyed with it that he exclaims as follows—]

अच्युतोऽहमचिन्त्योऽहमतर्क्योऽहमजोऽस्म्यहम् ।
अप्राणोऽहमकारोऽहमनङ्गोऽस्म्यभयोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ ८१॥

acyutō'hamacintyō'hamatarkyō'hamajō'smyaham ।
aprāṇō'hamakāyō'hamanaṅgō'smyabhayō'smyaham ॥ 81॥

“Verse no. 81 = I cannot be demoted or degraded from my exalted stature; I am not fallen and degenerate.

I am beyond comprehension and thoughts (i.e. I am so mysterious, esoteric and enigmatic that I just cannot be fully understood).

I am beyond the limits of logic and rational understanding from the perspective of this gross, material world (i.e. no one can understand me by applying logics of the material world and try to prove or disapprove my existence in some science laboratory as if I were some material object or some animal species from an alien planet).

I am without a birth (because I am eternal, imperishable and infinite).

I do not have any (spiritual and inherent character) deformities symbolised by such external signs as wounds or tumors (i.e. I am perfectly healthy and without any scars or blemishes in my immaculate character and nature).

I do not have a gross body, and therefore I do not have any organs or any fears that come with the possession of a body (such as from old age, enemies, diseases, pains and other such torments that have a direct relation with the body) (81).

अशब्दोऽहमरूपोऽहमस्पर्शोऽस्म्यहमदृयः ।
अरसोऽहमगन्धोऽहमनादिरमृतोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ ८२॥

aśabdō'hamarūpō'hamasparśō'smyahamadvayaḥ ।
arasō'hamagandhō'hamanādiramṛtō'smyaham ॥ 82॥

“Verse no. 82 = I am without words and forms (i.e. I cannot be described in words; I have no physical attributes and features; my true form has no physical dimensions which words can hope to describe or express). Therefore, I am beyond the perception of touch and the sense of feeling (that is associated with anything gross and physical, simply because I have no forms).

I am non-dual, immutable, universal and uniform. [This is one of the reasons why I can't be precisely and correctly described, because each word and each phrase used to describe me would be limiting me, but that would be erroneous as I am limitless and infinite. Each word or phrase has more than one meaning when used in different contexts, whereas I am one whole indivisible single Unit. Further, how can anything that has no form be of two types, or be 'dual'? That is why I am 'non-dual'. Again, Truth is always one and not two, another reason of my being 'non-dual, uniform, universal and immutable'.]

That is also why I am without the gross perceptions of taste and smell. [This is because I have no gross body with the organs that can taste or smell. I am non-dual, so there is no separate thing that has a taste which is tasted by someone else, and neither is there some thing that emanates a smell that can be smelled by someone else.]

I am an embodiment of eternal and primary elixir of creation called Amrit. [This is evident in the fact that after the previous creation came to an end, everything else perished except me. Thus, I must be something on which death has no effect, and such a thing is called Amrit because it is an ambrosia of eternity and imperishability.] (82).

अक्षयोऽहमलिङ्गोऽहमजरोऽस्म्यकलोऽस्म्यहम् ।
अप्राणोऽहममूकोऽहमचिन्त्योऽस्म्यकृतोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ ८३॥

akṣayō'hamaliṅgō'hamajarō'smyakalō'smyaham ।
aprāṇō'hamamūkō'hamacintyō'smyakṛtō'smyaham ॥ 83॥

“Verse no. 83 = I am imperishable and do not decay or come to ruin. I am without a body and its organs. I am therefore not subjected to the decay of the body and the effects of old age. I have no dimensions, forms, shapes, fractions or aspects. [All this is simply because I am formless, eternal, infinite and imperishable as well as universal, uniform, immutable and non-dual.]

I have no Pran (physical life) but still I can speak (i.e. I have manifested myself in the subtle world as the faculty of speech).

I am so mystical, esoteric and enigmatic that I am beyond thoughts and comprehension. [Refer verse no. 86.]

I do not do any deeds (because the deeds are done by the physical body and I am not the body but the subtle, sublime and pure consciousness which is absolutely distinct from the physical gross body) (83).

अन्तर्याम्यहमग्राह्योऽनिर्देश्योऽहमलक्षणः ।
अगोत्रोऽहमगात्रोऽहमचक्षुष्कोऽस्म्यवागहम् ॥ ८४॥

antaryāmyahamagrāhyō'nirdēśyō'hamalakṣaṇaḥ ।
agōtrō'hamagātrō'hamacakṣuṣkō'smyavāgaham ॥ 84॥

“Verse no. 84 = I dwell inside all the creatures and know their inner thoughts and feelings. [That is why I am called ‘Antar-yaami’, i.e. one who lives inside and knows the inner secrets.]

I cannot be caught hold of or grasped. [That is, neither can I be physically held because I have no gross body, nor can I be understood and grasped by the mind because I am the most mysterious entity in creation.]

I do not need any directions; I do not have any directions. [This is an excellent example of playing around with words. I do not need any directions implies that I know everything and therefore do not need any advice or guidance; it also means that I need not be told where to go or in which direction to proceed simply because I am all-pervading and omnipresent entity. Similarly, I have no limiting body or form which has any sense of physical direction as north or south. Since I am an all-pervading, omnipresent and ubiquitous entity, the concept of having any direction where I am not present does not apply to me. The various directions of the compass have a limited dimension in space and area, a notion that is not applicable to me.]

I have no attributes or defining qualities or characters or features.

I do not have any clan, lineage, caste or creed; (and this is because) I do not have any physical body. Hence, I do not also have the organ of sight called eye, or the organ of speech (called the tongue and mouth) (84).

अदृश्योऽहमवर्णोऽहमखण्डोऽस्म्यहमद्भुतः ।
अश्रुतोऽहमदृष्टोऽहमन्वेष्टव्योऽमरोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ ८५॥

adrśyō'hamavarṇō'hamakhaṇḍō'smyahamadbhutaḥ ।
aśrutō'hamadr̥ṣṭō'hamanvēṣṭavyō'marō'smyaham ॥ 85॥

“Verse no. 85 = I am invisible (because only gross things can be seen, but I am the invisible ethereal ‘spirit’). I have no colours or distinguishing marks that puts me into one or the other classes in the society. I am immutable, indivisible, one and wholesome. I am therefore most strange, mysterious, enigmatic and esoteric, and therefore beyond comprehension and grasp of the mind.

I cannot be heard or seen. I am an entity that is worthy of deep research, pondering and contemplation.

I am eternal and infinite, something that never dies because it is immortal and imperishable (85).

अवायुरप्यनाकाशोऽतेजस्कोऽव्यभिचार्यहम् ।
अमतोऽहमजातोऽहमतिसूक्ष्मोऽविकार्यहम् ॥ ८६॥

avāyurapyanākāśō'tējaskō'vyabhicāryaham ।
amatō'hamajāto'hamatisūkṣmō'vikāryaham ॥ 86॥

“Verse no. 86 = I am not the wind or the air element, and neither am I the sky or fire elements. [That is, I should not be judged by weighing me or measuring me against or comparing me with these elements simply because I have a non-gross and subtle body. Though these elements along with others are my manifestations, but it is not the other way round.]

I do not involve myself in promiscuous behaviour (i.e. I do not violate the rules of propriety, probity, righteousness and auspiciousness; I am faithful and steadfast in my beliefs and convictions).

I am unknown and cannot be known in entirety. [Refer verse no. 83.]

I have no birth (because I am eternal and infinite).

I am smaller than the minutest (because I am smaller than the tip of the hair follicle—see verse no. 14), and without any faults or shortcomings of any kind (86).

अरजस्कोऽतमस्कोऽहमसत्त्वोऽस्म्यगुणोऽस्म्यहम् ।
अमायोऽनुभवात्माहमनन्योऽविषयोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ ८७॥

arajaskō'tamaskō'hamasattvō'smyaguṇō'smyaham ।
amāyō'nubhavātmāhamananyō'viṣayō'smyaham ॥ 87॥

“Verse no. 87= I am free from the effects of the three Gunas called Sata, Raja and Tama¹. I am beyond their reach. I am therefore free from the effects of Maya²; I do not possess the element called Maya (i.e. I am free from the delusory effects caused by these three Gunas as well as by ignorance of the truth).

I am myself experienced and well versed in everything (and therefore cannot be led astray by false charms and enticing allurements proffered by Maya). At the same time, I am an entity that can be experienced (as the ultimate Truth, pure consciousness and infinite bliss that is obtained upon self-realisation).

I am infinite and fathomless.

I am not the material object of the world that can be pursued by the sense organs of the body (87).

[Note—¹The *three Gunas*—The character of all the living beings in the entire creation is dependent upon three primary qualities called the Gunas. They are Sata, Raja and Tama.

(a) The *Sata Guna* is the best of the three qualities present in any creature. It is a positive quality and is marked by a propensity for following the path of nobility, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, holiness and righteousness. Creatures that have a predominance of Sata Guna are inclined to do selfless service, be benevolent, merciful, kind and gracious, have coolness of head and a rationale and balanced mind, be contented, have

humility and piety etc. Such creatures are devoted to good values in life and have a desire to acquire knowledge that would help them reach higher spiritual goals in life.

This Sata Guna is marked by high standards of ethical and moral existence that makes the bearer of such qualities highly respected in society. Such people have a spiritual dimension to their personality. This quality is spiritually uplifting and gives a divine halo to those who possess it and practice it.

The Vasanas that have the Sata Guna or quality dominant in them are like a veil covering the lamp or like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort.

(b) The second quality is the *Raja Guna* and it makes a man more attracted to this material world and its charms, and less spiritually inclined. The Raja Guna is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It makes a creature inclined towards the material things of the gross world and their enjoyments, towards creation of wealth, its enhancement and protection, and generally having a desire for growth, development and expansion etc. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, a desire to acquire, retain and develop such acquisitions even to the detriment of one's long term spiritual welfare and even if such actions cause pain to others. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Vasanas that have the Rajasic Guna or quality dominant in them can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality.

(c) The third quality is called the *Tama Guna* and is the meanest and the basest of the three Gunas. It is a demeaning quality in a creature that leads to his downfall and perpetual entanglement with things that are considered improper and unethical. It creates an inclination for committing all sorts of sins, misdeeds and demeanours. It leads the creature towards negativity and inspires him to acquire negative qualities such as various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. It makes him inclined to be greedy, rapacious, haughty, arrogant, lustful, intoxicated, vile and wild to the extreme. Such a creature with a predominance of Tama Guna has utter disregard for propriety, noble virtues and ethics, for righteousness and morality.

In brief, it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, and leads to such behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraved, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness. It therefore leads to his downfall, ignominy and ruin as well as ignorance, delusions, gloom, inertia, anger, frustration etc.

The Tamasic Guna or quality is like the embryonic membrane that covers the foetus in the womb. They cannot be removed easily and require great diligence, effort, persistence, dedication and careful handling requiring time

and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, and the worst type to possess.

The Vasanas that have the Tama Guna in dominance are regarded as the 'bad Vasanas' or better still the 'worst type of Vasana' that any individual can have.

The varying quantity and intensity of these three in any given individual would decide his specific character and how he is inclined to deal with the world and a given circumstance. The various permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular nature of an individual, giving him his individuality and his special personality which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process, et al. Two individuals having the same external form of the gross body might look very much alike but they vary immensely in their nature, habit, temperaments, inclinations, behaviour, thinking, outlook, the way they act and do their deeds, the way they tackle the problems of life, the level of their wisdom and intelligence, their personality and their general way of living.

This is also the reason why it is believed that a creature has to roam in 84 Lakh wombs or forms of life; it is only a metaphor—it does not mean an actual and countable specific number of births that the creatures have to take, but only symbolise the huge possibilities of individual characteristics that are determined by the differing ratios of these three Gunas, and the immense number of individuals that exhibit these characteristics in this creation.

The three Gunas that determine the individual character of the creature, that determine his 'individuality' as compared to the general character of the group to which that individual belongs, are like the *isotopes* in chemistry. The isotope refers to the phenomenon wherein one of two or more atoms of the same chemical element that contain the same number of protons but different numbers of neutrons in their nuclei and therefore have the same atomic number and chemical properties but different mass numbers and physical properties. For example, two brothers have the same genes and the same inheritance, but the presence of the three Gunas in different ratios between them changes their personality and thought processes. One may be a highly righteous man while the other might be just the opposite. Their parents are the same, their upbringing is the same, they have attended the same school and ate the same food, but there is a deep chasm when it comes to their character as individuals.

Since each individual is like an independent piece of mosaic that completes the entire picture in conjunction with other such pieces, this individual creature's nature and character helps to determine the overall shape of the creation. These Gunas keep the creation in a state of constant change, because numerous creatures die every moment and new ones are born. The Supreme Being has to be constantly on the alert because of this flux.

The various permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular 'nature' of an individual giving him his individuality and his special characters which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process et al. Two individuals having the same external form of the gross body—e.g. two men—might look very much alike but they vary immensely in their nature, habit, behaviour, thinking, outlook, action and deeds, wisdom and way of living. This is what is meant when it said that a creature has to roam in 84 Lakh wombs or forms of life; it is only a metaphor

—it does not mean an actual, countable specific number that there are actually and physically 84 Lakh types of bodies of living beings; it only symbolically refers to the huge possibilities that are possible with these three ‘Gunas’ and their different combinations that can imaginably produce a myriad variety of creation that can be created with these three basic qualities and their various sub classes of qualities.

The proportion of the three Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclination of the creatures. For example, a person with a greater proportion of ‘Satvic’ (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of ‘Rajasic’ or ‘Tamasic’ qualities. So we can say that sages, seers, prophets, scholars and generally enlightened persons have a high degree of ‘Satvic’ qualities in them; kings and householders who live a noble life are example of those with higher amount of ‘Rajasic’ quality in them; while sinners, killers, drunks, rowdy elements, cheats etc. are those people with higher ‘Tamasic’ quality in them. These Gunas have direct bearing on the personality of a man.

The first quality of Sattva is concerned with creation and enhancement of knowledge and wisdom. For this, one has to remain alert and vigilant like Brahma. The ‘Jagrat state’ also corresponds to that state when the creature is awake and interacts physically with the external world, imbibes whatever knowledge and information that comes to it, gains experience, and physically reacts to that knowledge and information. Further, such people are regarded as seniors in society, and they are best depicted in the form of the old patriarch Brahma the creator. They remain so engrossed in the world that they forget who they actually are, what their true identity is, and the very basic fact that what they are thinking to be real is actually not.

Next comes the ‘Swapna state’ in which a man dreams, and it is a metaphor for imagination and visualization of things based on the experience and knowledge gained during the Jagrat state. In this state a man lives and does things in a virtual manner in a virtual world of dreams. He sustains and nourishes his imaginations, fantasies and conceptions in a world of dreams which is far away from the harsh realities of life in the physical world. He suffers and enjoys in his dreams, then when he wakes up, he sometimes forgets what that imaginary world was like, but at other times there have been incidents wherein he has got new insight and new inspiration while he was dreaming. This is how Vishnu sustains and nourishes the creation created by Brahma. For all practical purposes, a dreaming man appears to be in a state resembling the state of Samadhi, or a state when an aspirant is in deep meditation and engrossed in contemplation, because he remains aloof and oblivious to the external world, and remains absolutely motionless. But this state is temporary, because he would revert back or wake up to the Jagrat state. That is why Lord Vishnu, who represents this quality of Raja, is depicted as perpetually reclining contemplatively on the bed of the coiled legendary serpent floating on the celestial ocean of milk called Kshirsagar. Since without a vision and imagination one cannot grow, develop and rise, Vishnu is regarded as a maverick player of fantastic tricks in order to sustain and enhance his interests of looking after the creation. Out of these Trinity Gods, it is Vishnu who assumes so many forms and adopts so many tricks to do the needful.

The third quality of Tama is represented by Shiva, and that is why he shows certain traits which are so typical of this quality—viz. being short tempered, and destroying at the shortest notice; his external behaviour and attire also represents the excess of this lowest quality in him. The Sushupta state that he represents stands for being totally oblivious of the external world, and remaining in total bliss. This is exactly how Shiva has been depicted—he remains in a perpetual state of meditation, completely indifferent to the external world, unconcerned and detached from the attractions of the enchanting outside when he can find complete bliss inside his own bosom. The Tama quality marks the presence of ignorance in a greater ratio, and this is depicted by Shiva when he remains ignorant of the niceties of worldly behaviour, notwithstanding his exalted stature of being the greatest amongst the Gods.

²Maya—The word Maya briefly means something that is deluding and ensnaring, something that is not the reality but gives an impression that is just the opposite. *Maya* is a word which has two parts, Ma + Ya. The first half means a 'mother; a progenitor; something that creates', while the other half refers to the 'notion of doubt, of either this or that; the notion marked by uncertainty'. The word 'Ma' also means 'to measure, mark off, by any standard; to show, to exhibit, to display; to infer, to conclude; to be formed, built, made of'. Therefore, the composite word Maya refers to a situation which harbours or creates uncertainties, where it is uncertain whether what is said or understood or seen or witnessed or experienced is actually the truth or not. It is virtually the 'mother of all confusions, doubts and perplexities'. It therefore refers to something or some situation which creates or produces perplexities, doubts and confusions, something that is not real; that which is deluding, illusionary, deceptive, mirage-like and deceitful, and is caused by the ignorance about its truth and reality; something that has no substance or pith; displays no certainty and leads to wrong inference. The term Maya is used to define this entire complex phenomenon at once. Hence, Maya is a synonym used for all that is deceptive, faulty, false, deluding, ignorance-based, illusionary, imposturing, deceitful, invisible and super-natural in the sense that it defies all logic and understanding; all that which has no reality or substance inspite of appearing to be for real; all that is hollow and lacks gravity though appearing to be solid and dense. It creates hallucinations in a creature's mind leading him to believe that what he sees is the truth. It is the deluding and magical powers of the supreme transcendental Lord that hides the reality and creates an imaginary world of deceptions and misconceptions.

Maya has three basic constituent qualities. Hence it is called *Trigunmayi*, i.e. one which has the three Gunas or qualities. These three Gunas or qualities are—Sata, Raja and Tama as described above.

The basic idea here is that Maya is like a transparent coloured sheet which covers the supreme 'truth' in the creation. Since it is transparent, it assumes the attributes of the 'truth' that it covers, because for all practical purposes an ordinary man is unable to see that veil because of its transparency. But at the same time, being tinged by different Gunas, the view of the 'truth' as seen through the veil of Maya gets tainted or distorted consonantly. This is a simple way of understanding what is called 'illusion and Maya vis-à-vis the Truth and Reality'. Maya nevertheless hides the truthfulness of the Truth, and instead lends its own attributes and characteristics to that Truth known as the 'Nirgun

Brahm' by the Upanishads when the latter is observed through this veil, while at the same time assuming the glorious attributes of Brahm itself. So ignorant fools think that the Maya is the real thing, whereas they are actually seeing the 'veiled truth' as observed through this covering of Maya, because the actual 'truth' is hidden from view by this transparent sheet which has lend it its own colour and hue to it . As a result, that Nirgun appears to have some attributes, and it thereby becomes 'Sagun', or the one with attributes and characteristics, by the interference of Maya.]

अद्वैतोऽहमपूर्णोऽहमबाह्योऽहमनन्तरः ।
अश्रोतोऽहमदीर्घोऽहमव्यक्तोऽहमनामयः ॥ ८८॥

advaitō'hamapūrṇō'hamabāhyō'hamanantaraḥ ।
aśrōtō'hamadīrghō'hamavyaktō'hamanāmayah ॥ 88॥

“Verse no. 88 = I am non-dual, immutable and one. I am complete and wholesome. I have no outside or inside; I am neither outside nor inside. [That is, since I have no physical body, there is no cause for the existence of concepts of outside and inside, as this demarcation can happen only when there is a physical boundary enclosing a particular area of space, such as an empty pitcher or room. Refer verse no. 84.]

I have no ears (because I have no physical body).

I am not even huge and long (because anything that has no physical dimension cannot be measured).

I am un-manifest and without visible characteristics and attributes.

I am free from any disease or faults that ordinarily afflict all the creatures of this creation. [Refer verse no. 81.] (88).

अद्वयानन्दविज्ञानघनोऽस्म्यहमविक्रियः ।
अनिच्छोऽहमलेपोऽहमकर्तास्म्यहमद्वयः ॥ ८९॥

advayānandavijñānaghanō'smyahamavikriyah ।
anicchō'hamalēpō'hamakartāsmyahamadvayah ॥ 89॥

“Verse no. 89 = I am a non-dual entity that is an embodiment of infinite beatitude and felicity, and of enlightenment, erudition and wisdom.

I am faultless and without any taints or blemishes.

I have no desires and yearnings. I am not engrossed in or entangled with anything; I have no attachments with and attractions towards anything pertaining to this material world.

I am not the doer of anything (because the deeds are done by the body and not by the Atma which happens to be my 'true self and identity').

I am a non-dual entity (that need not do anything because there is nothing besides this entity in this creation) (89).

अविद्याकार्यहीनोऽहमवाग्रसनगोचरः ।
अनल्पोऽहमशोकोऽहमविकल्पोऽस्म्यविज्वलन् ॥ ९०॥

avidyākāryahīnō'hamavāgrasanagōcaraḥ ।
analpō'hamaśōkō'hamavikalpō'smyavijvalan ॥ 90॥

“Verse no. 90 = I do not do anything that is done out of ignorance and lack of proper and correct knowledge.

I am not perceived by application of either the Mana (mind) or the Vaani (speech). [That is, I am beyond the reach and grasp of both the Mana as well as the Vaani. I cannot be understood by application of the mind and its various faculties, and I cannot be described and limited by words.]

I have no small fraction; I do not come under the category of things that are small or limited in scope, or that can be measured by a scale that is applicable to worldly things (for I am vast, fathomless and measureless; I am infinite and endless)¹.

I am free from all grief, sorrows, miseries and agonies of all kinds.

I have no alternatives and no parallels.

I do not have to subscribe to any specific way of life revolving around or recognised by some special type of fire². [In other words, the eclectic and divine entity that is being referred to in these verses does not come under the purview of any of these fires and their related things. It need not conform to any particular way of life revolving around a specific type of fire, or observe a set of sacrosanct rules or perform any of the rituals involving a specific type of fire to be regarded as holy, righteous, divine and auspicious. Even without subscribing to any particular type of divine fire, it is nevertheless holy, divine, pure, auspicious and righteous.] (90).

[Note--¹This is easy to understand—we do not measure the distances of far away stars and galaxies in meters or centimeters. They are measured in light years—the distance traveled by light in one year which is a standard measure for astronomical distances. Likewise, we cannot weigh the planets in grams or kilograms. In other words, the supreme transcendental entity that is the subject matter of these verses as well as the Upanishads in general cannot be measured by a measuring tape with a mundane worldly perspective, for it is super-human, outwardly and transcendental.

²There are five special types of *fires* which are related to five types of circumstances or events in the life of a man. They have been elaborately described in Chandogya Upanishad, canto 4, section 10 to 13. They are—(a) ‘Garhyapatya’ (the fire of the household hearth), (b) ‘Dakshinagni’ (the fire used as a witness to making charities or any other religious festivity), (c) ‘Ahawaniya’ (the fire to invoke the Gods during a ritualistic sacrifice), (d) ‘Sabhya’ (the fire of the Vedic period which was continuously lit) and (e) ‘Awasathya’ (the fire of the later Smriti period). Worship of the three important fires have been described in Chandogya Upanishad, canto 2, section 24, while canto 5, sections 4-10, 19-24 explain their great symbolic metaphysical significance.

The Garhyapatya fire—This is the householder’s fire. A householder has land and farm representing ‘earth’ in which he grows food. This food is grown

with the help of the light of the Sun, and it is cooked in the fire of the fire place in the house. Hence, the Garhyapatya fire, or the householder's fire, is intrinsically present and is implied in these 4 entities. It is an integral part of these four. The earth has the 'fire element' because without heat and warmth, no seed would germinate and no life can survive on this earth. The food has fire present inherently in it because it is the energy inherent in food which helps to energise the creature that eats it. The presence of heat in the sun does not need to be explained because it is very evident.

The Dakshinagni fire—is a witness to making of charities when some water is poured as libation to the Gods. It signifies that the Gods are offered water to drink. To give water to the thirsty is the greatest form of charity. Therefore, this fire is symbolically present in water, and when it is poured, it signifies that the heat produced by sins committed by the person has been doused. Charities and donations make a man famous and renowned, hence the allusion to directions of the earth. His glory shines like the bright moon and he is called a star among human beings. He is the most exalted amongst his peers and compatriots even as the moon is most prominent amongst the stars in the sky.

The Ahawaniya fire—is lit to invoke Gods, and the Gods live in the heaven; hence the reference to the sky, heavens and electric. Since Pran is the best form of the vital winds, the allusion means that the Gods are the most exalted forms that exist in creation. The 'electric' is a metaphor for immense strength, potent and power, which of course the fire possesses. This inherent quality of Electric that it possess most stupendous powers and strength is likened to the presence of Brahm in it even as the great power and strength present in a man is due to the Atma or Pran present in him. Even as a man is useless without the presence of Pran in him, the Electric would lose its importance if there was no Brahm present in it which gives it its punch and strength.

The following are also regarded as the five fires—(i) The Sun, (ii) The Lightning, (iii) The Terrestrial fire, (iv) The Master or Lord of the household, and (v) The Chief Priest.

According to Garbho-panishad, paragraph 5 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, the body of the living organism is called 'Deha' or body because it harbours the Fire element in it.]

आदिमध्यान्तहीनोऽहमाकाशसदृशोऽस्म्यहम् ।
आत्मचैतन्यरूपोऽहमहमानन्दविद्धनः ॥ ९१॥

ādimadhyāntahīnō'hamākāśasadr̥śō'smyaham ।
ātmacaitanyarūpō'hamahamānandacidghanah ॥ 91॥

“Verse no. 91 = I do not have a beginning, middle or end. I am like the sky (i.e. endless, fathomless, measureless and infinite). [Refer verse no. 98.]

I am the pure conscious Atma. I am that eternal, cosmic and all-pervading Consciousness which is a measureless treasure of beatitude and felicity. [Refer verse no. 92.] (91).

आनन्दामृतरूपोऽहमात्मसंस्थोऽहमन्तरः ।
आत्मकामोऽहमाकाशात्परमात्मेश्वरोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ ९२॥

ānandāmṛtarūpō'hamātmasaṁsthōhamantarahaḥ ।
ātmakāmōhamākāśātparamātmēśvarō'smyaham ॥ 92॥

“Verse no. 92 = I am an embodiment of Anand (bliss and joyous abundance). I am like Amrit (the elixir of life that provides both eternity and bliss). [Refer verse no. 91.]

I am established in my Atma. I am an entity that is the inner-self of all living beings as their conscious Atma (soul).

I am ‘Atma-Kaam’, i.e. I am fully contented with my Atma and my self. I am like the supreme Atma (the cosmic Consciousness or the supreme Brahm) that is like the sky (i.e. I am as vast, infinite, eternal, measureless, fathomless and featureless as the sky) (92).

ईशानोऽस्म्यहमीदृयोऽहमहमुत्तमपूरुषः ।
उत्कृष्टोऽहमुपद्रष्टा अहमुत्तरतोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ ९३॥

īśānō'smyahamīḍyō'hamahamuttamapūruṣaḥ ।
utkrṣṭō'hamupadraṣṭā ahamuttaratō'smyaham ॥ 93॥

“Verse no. 93 = I am Ishaan (Lord Shiva, the emblem and insignia of divinity and holiness). I am worthy of worship and reverence. I am the best and the most exalted Purush (i.e. I am the Viraat Purush—the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm from whom the rest of creation evolved—personified). I am, therefore, the best, immaculate and the most exalted entity in creation.

I am merely a witness to whatever that is happening in this world (because I am not involved in this world, I am neutral, and I am not a doer of anything, so I simply watch everything like a dispassionate observer who is not at all concerned about the consequences of the happenings).

I am beyond everything and every considerations; I am transcendental and even beyond its definitions (93).

केवलोऽहं कविः कर्माध्यक्षोऽहं करणाधिपः ।
गुहाशयोऽहं गोप्ताहं चक्षुषश्चक्षुरस्म्यहम् ॥ ९४॥

kēvalō'haṁ kaviḥ karmādhyakṣō'haṁ karaṇādhīpaḥ ।
guhāśayō'haṁ gōptāhaṁ cakṣuṣaścakṣurasmyaham ॥ 94॥

“Verse no. 94 = I am the only one of my own kind; I have no parallel.

I am a 'Kavi', i.e. I am an expert in words and expressions; I am well lettered and well read.

I am the Lord who presides over all deeds and judges them (because I am the Supreme Being personified).

I am the cause of all causes (i.e. I am the one who is behind everything that has a cause, and I am the seed that is at the root of all causes giving rise to myriad happenings in this world).

I am the implied secret meaning behind everything mysterious, enigmatic, esoteric and mystical (in the sphere of mysticism, theology, metaphysics and spiritualism). Indeed, I am secret and keep myself secret.

I am the hidden eye which empowers the visible organ of the eye to see things. [In other words, I am the subtle power and authority that actually 'sees' things, and use the external organ of the eye as merely an instrument to aid me in seeing them. This is because I wish to remain secret and behind the curtain. I am the subtle faculty of seeing that resides in the eyes and empowers them to carry out the function of 'seeing'.] (94).

विदानन्दोऽस्म्यहं चेता चिद्गनश्चिन्मयोऽस्म्यहम् ।
ज्योतिर्मयोऽस्म्यहं ज्यायाज्योतिषां ज्योतिरस्म्यहम् ॥ ९५॥

cidānandō'smyaham cētā cidghanaścinmayō'smyaham ।
jyōtirmayō'smyaham jyāyāñjyōtiṣāṁ jyōtirasmyaham ॥ 95॥

“Verse no. 95 = I am eternally blissful and happy.

I am the one who infuses life and consciousness to all others. [In other words, I am the Atma which injects consciousness and life in the gross body of all the living beings. Without me, they would all be dead and lifeless.]

I am a treasure and fountain of enlightenment and knowledge, of wisdom and erudition. [Refer verse no. 93.]

I am not only illuminated but am an embodiment or a fount of the best form of illumination in existence (95).

तमसः साक्ष्यहं तुर्यतुर्योऽहं तमसः परः ।
दिव्यो देवोऽस्मि दुर्दर्शो दृष्टाध्यायो ध्रुवोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ ९६॥

tamaśaḥ sākṣyaham turyaturyō'ham tamaśaḥ paraḥ ।
divyō dēvō'smi durdarśō dṛṣṭādhyāyō dhruvō'smyaham ॥ 96॥

“Verse no. 96 = In the dark, I am like a secret witness to everything. [In other words, no one should think that if he does anything in the dark or in secret, if he acts surreptitiously and deceitfully, he can hoodwink me who am the consciousness and the Atma. That is why it is said that the Lord watches every deed of the man, whether done overtly or covertly.]

I am the basic essence of the word Turya, i.e. I transcend all planes of existence and am beyond all definitions. [The 'Turya' is the fourth state of transcendental existence when the ascetic goes beyond all awareness of the existence of the world. This concept has been explained separately in an appendix.]

I am beyond the reach of darkness. [That is, darkness in any form can have no effect on me, it cannot touch me, and it cannot cast its gloomy shadow upon me. 'Darkness' is connected to anything that has a negative connotation, such as ignorance, delusions, falsehoods, illusions, deceit, conceit, etc. It is negativity in all its dimensions. Thus, this stanza means that the divine entity being referred to here is not at all affected by any of the things that come within the definition of Darkness. The untold reason behind it is that I am eternally 'self-illuminated', and where there is light there can be no darkness of any kind, physical or otherwise. Refer last stanza of verse no. 95.]

I am a glorious living embodiment of Divinity and Godliness. I am farsighted and can be 'seen', or witnessed and experienced by those who have farsightedness. [That is, the pure conscious Atma is not perceivable by all and sundry. Every Tom, Dick and Harry cannot know it or see it. It requires a lot of deep insight and erudition, a lot of patience and self-control, a lot of diligence and sincerity to even have a glimpse of one corner of this divine and esoteric Godhead. After all, the words 'supreme and transcendental and beyond comprehension' etc. cannot refer to the mundane, the known and the routine.]

I am that eternal and steady Truth that is at the foundation of sight, that gives meaning and substance to what is being seen, that proves that what is seen is actually the reality and the truth, that it cannot be false because it is actually 'seen' first hand. [In other words, one can see things that have an existence, and not things that have no existence. The latter would come under the category of 'imagination of the deluded and hallucinating mind'. The mirage seen in the hot desert comes under this latter category. Even the world of material sense objects that are perishable come under this class. But there is another dimension to this world which is not so easily seen but is nevertheless the 'real and truthful thing', and it is this entity that is being referred here. It is the ultimate 'Truth' called the Consciousness without which nothing would be seen in the first place, whether real or unreal. This concealed entity is the truth in the form of consciousness that forms the foundation upon which the activity called 'seeing' and the faculty of sight are rested. The proof of this lies in the fact that a man from whose body consciousness or Pran has left, i.e. a dead man, never sees anything inspite of the fact that the eye is still there in the body as much as is the brain in the skull of the same body. These two entities that had been seeing everything clearly a while ago become unable to do so now because the consciousness or Atma, also called by its synonym the Pran, has left the body. So we deduce that the function of seeing was not done by either the eye or the brain but by something else. And this 'something else' is the 'consciousness' (Atma) that injects and activates the factor of 'life' (Pran) into these and other organs of the body.] (96).

नित्योऽहं निखटोऽहं निष्क्रियोऽस्मि निरञ्जनः ।

निर्मलो निर्विकल्पोऽहं निराख्यातोऽस्मि निश्चलः ॥ ९७॥

nityō'ham niravadyō'ham niṣkriyō'smi nirañjanaḥ ।
nirmalō nirvikalpō'ham nirākhyātō'smi niścalaḥ ॥ 97॥

“Verse no. 97 = I am eternal and omnipresent; I am present in every moment of life. I am innocent, guiltless, taintless and faultless.

I do not do anything; I am a non-doer of deeds (because all the deeds are done by the body and not by the pure consciousness).

I am without any blemishes and dark taint of any kind; I am flawless.

I am pure and immaculate. I have no alternatives and no parallels. [Refer verse no. 98.]

I have no family and lineage from which I could draw my name, fame and renown, my mystical powers, authority and divinity. [The word ‘Nirakhyaat’ means name, fame, renown, a description of some royal family, family lineage, or legion of saints. In other words, I have no parent from whom I could have my birth and from whom I could derive or inherit my fame and powers. I do not depend upon anyone else’s legacy. What I am is my own being, have my own unique character and virtues, and I do not depend upon someone else to acquire some kind of greatness and divinity, some kind of mystical powers and authority. My divinity, holiness and godliness etc. are a part of my inborn and inherent attributes, virtues and abilities.]

I am steady and unwavering; I do not fluctuate; I do not undergo any change (like the waxing and waning phases of the moon) (97).

निर्विकारो नित्यपूतो निर्गुणो निःस्पृहोऽस्म्यहम् ।
निरिन्द्रियो नियन्ताहं निरपेक्षोऽस्मि निष्कलः ॥ ९८॥

nirvikārō nityapūtō nirguṇō niḥsprhō'smyaham ।
nirindriyō niyantāhaṁ nirapēkṣō'smi niśkalaḥ ॥ 98॥

“Verse no. 98 = I am without any faults and taints of any kind (refer verse no. 97). I am eternally and infinitely pure, uncorrupt and immaculate. I have no definable and delineable attributes and qualifications. I am detached with and non-involved in everything.

I have no gross organs of the body (because I am formless and an ethereal spirit). [Refer verse no. 91.]

I am the ultimate controller and regulator of everything. I am neutral and dispassionate.

I have no Kalaas (i.e. I have no fractions or characters that can be definitely be delineated, defined and understood; I am one single non-dual entity that has no fractions and separate aspects) (98).

पुरुषः परमात्माहं पुराणः परमोऽस्म्यहम् ।
परावरोऽस्म्यहं प्राज्ञः प्रपञ्चोपशमोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ ९९॥

puruṣaḥ paramātmāhaṁ purāṇaḥ paramō'smyaham ।
parāvarō'smyaham prājñaḥ prapañcōpaśamō'smyaham ॥ 99॥

“Verse no. 99 = I am the supreme Purush (i.e. I am a personification of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic revelation of the supreme Brahm, and from whom all the other Gods as well as the rest of creation came into being, and who has revealed himself in the image of the man). Hence, I am the most ancient and traditional supreme transcendental Parmatma (i.e. I am the Supreme Being himself who is the most ancient in the sense that he existed even before the creation came into being).

I am a fathomless and infinite ocean (treasure) of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment (Paraavar). I am wise and enlightened enough to crush all delusions and deceit that might be created out of falsehoods and ignorance (99).

परामृतोऽस्म्यहं पूर्णः प्रभुरस्मि पुरातनः ।
पूर्णानन्दैकबोधोऽहं प्रत्यगेकरसोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ १००॥

parāmṛtō'smyaham pūrṇaḥ prabhurasmi purātanaḥ ।
pūrṇānandaikabōdhō'haṁ pratyagēkarasō'smyaham ॥ 100॥

“Verse no. 100 = I am the best Amrit (the eternal elixir of life and wisdom; the ambrosia of eternity and bliss that is drunk by the Gods) and the most ancient and complete supreme Lord. [That is, I represent that elixir which gives eternal life and beatitude because I am the Supreme Being, the undisputable Lord of creation himself personified.]

I am a personification of wholesome and complete bliss and happiness (because I am Amrit personified). I am an embodiment of that knowledge and enlightenment which is one and non-dual, which has no two meanings or aspects (that can cause any kind of confusions or vexations as to which one of them is the ‘truth’).

I am the evident truth in the form of the consciousness that resides inside the inner self of all living beings. I have only one subtle and sublime form that never changes, and that has only one divine contour (as the ‘consciousness’). All of them are nothing but me (100).

प्रज्ञातोऽहं प्रशान्तोऽहं प्रकाशः परमेश्वरः ।
एकदा चिन्त्यमानोऽहं द्वैताद्वैतविलक्षणः ॥ १०१॥

prajñātō'haṁ praśāntō'haṁ prakāśaḥ paramēśvaraḥ ।
ēkadā cintyamānō'haṁ dvaitādvaitavilakṣaṇaḥ ॥ 101॥

“Verse no. 101 = I am an expert who has specialized knowledge, erudition and wisdom (Pragyaataa).

I am very calm, tranquil and peaceful.

I am the splendid and self-illuminated entity known as the Parmeshwar (the supreme Ishwar, the Lord God) who is like the sky (i.e. is fathomless, infinite, endless, imperishable, attributeless, without any qualifications, all-pervading, all-encompassing, all-incorporating etc.). [In other words, I glow with a divine light emanating from my being which has given the rest of the world its light. Of course it is the ‘consciousness’ which lights up the world and makes it alive for the creature to enjoy it. Who would have liked to live in a dark and gloomy world with fearful ghosts and hobgoblins for company?]

Beyond the definitions and debates of what constitutes Dvaitya (dual concept of creation) and what is Advaitya (non-duality), I am neutral and the only entity that is worthy of research, contemplation, meditation and deep ponderings. [Obviously, when one comes in contact with such a mysterious entity that cannot be defined and which does not come under any known classifications or categories, an intelligent and inquisitive mind with an adventurous spirit would not leave it alone but delve deeper and deeper until one is able to unravel its secrets. In the realm of metaphysics and spiritualism, such researchers with adventurous spirits were ancient sages and seers who did not flow with the tide but dared to go against its overwhelming push to unravel the greatest secrets of creation. This discovery they revealed to others in the form of their teachings enshrined in the Upanishads.] (101).

बुद्धोऽहं भूतपालोऽहं भारूपो भगवानहम् ।
महाज्ञेयो महानस्मि महाज्ञेयो महेश्वरः ॥ १०२॥

buddhō'ham bhūtapālō'ham bhārūpō bhagavānaham ।
mahājñēyō mahānasmi mahājñēyō mahēśvaraḥ ॥ 102॥

“Verse no. 102 = I am intelligent and intelligence personified. I am the Lord who takes care of, sustains and protects all the mortal creatures called Bhuts—i.e. I am ‘Bhutpaal’.

I am the ‘Bhagvan¹’ who is not only enlightened and splendid but also an embodiment of the virtues metaphorically represented by ‘light’ with its brilliance, radiance, dazzle and splendour. [That is, as a divine entity that has all the positive, glorious and divine virtues which are collectively symbolised or represented by the single umbrella-like all-inclusive word ‘light’, as opposed to ‘darkness’ which would signify negativity, dearth and all lowly qualities, I glow with its divine halo which radiate out from me to light up the surrounding world and remove the darkness that is so foreboding and fearsome. Had it not been for me, the world would have been plunged into the nether world of destruction and decay. That is why I am called ‘Bhutpaal’, or the one who takes care of all the living beings by the virtue of my divine powers of knowledge, wisdom and erudition alongside astoundingly virtuous qualities such as compassion, benevolence, magnanimity, kindness, mercy, equanimity and graciousness.]

I am called Mahadev—i.e. the great Lord precisely for the aforesaid reasons.

I am great and majestic (because I not only possess astounding virtues but also put it to good use by benevolently taking care of this creation and its creatures).

I am the one who is also known as ‘Maha-Gyea’, i.e. one who is most knowledgeable, most omniscient, most wise, most erudite and most enlightened.

I am indeed the Maheshwar, i.e. the great Ishwar, the great Lord. [Incidentally, Lord Shiva is also known by this name of Maheshwar. The reason is that amongst the pantheon of Gods he is said to be most enlightened, a completely detached and self-realised Godhead, and a renunciate ascetic who remains perpetually in the state of meditation and contemplation in the remote snow covered mountains, away from the entrapments of the material world and its accompanying spiritual upheavals, perplexities and dilemmas.] (102).

[Note—¹The word ‘Bhagwan’ refers to an enlightened being who possesses certain divine qualities not possessed by ordinary human beings, and which are even difficult for the Gods to have. The word has two parts—‘Bhag’ and ‘Wan’. The 2nd part ‘wan’ means ‘one who possesses’, while the 1st part ‘Bhag’ means ‘one who is like the receptacle or womb’ that harbours the following six qualities or virtues—(1) to have ‘Aishwarya’, which means to possess all the virtues that come under the category of having majesty, powers, wealth, fortune, opulence, flourish, supremacy, sway, dominance, glory, grandeur, omnipotence and other divine faculties in existence; (2) to have all Dharma, which means to possess all virtues that come under the ambit of righteousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, and nobility of thought and conduct; (3) to possess all the glories and majesties that come under the definition of the word Yash, i.e. to have great fame, glory, majesty and renown; (4) to have Sree, i.e. to possess all wealth, prosperity, pomp and circumstance, to have prestige, dignity, respect, honour, splendour and glory, as well as all other factors associated with those qualities mentioned in serial no. 1-3 above; (5) to have complete and comprehensive Gyan, i.e. to have true, deep, incisive, complete and all-incorporating knowledge, erudition, wisdom, skills, expertise and enlightenment; and (6) at the same time to have immaculate and the highest degree of Vairagya, i.e. to have complete renunciation, detachment, indifference and dispassion towards everything in this gross, material, mortal world. Hence, anyone who is endowed with the above six divine, eclectic and exemplary qualities, is called a Bhagwan.]

विमुक्तोऽहं विभुरहं वरेण्यो व्यापकोऽस्म्यहम् ।
वैश्वानरो वासुदेवो विश्वतश्चक्षुरस्म्यहम् ॥ १०३॥

vimuktō'haṁ vibhuraḥaṁ varēṇyō vyāpakō'smyaham ।
vaiśvānarō vāsudēvō viśvataścakṣurasmyaham ॥ 103॥

103. I am free from all encumbrances. I am ‘Vibho’¹.

I am worthy to be invited, welcomed and accepted (i.e. I am an honourable, dignified and divine entity that all wise men should invoke, welcome, accept and show respect to; I am worthy of spiritual pursuit).

I am all-pervading and all-encompassing, being omnipresent, all-inclusive and ubiquitous.

I am the best form of the cosmic element called ‘Vaishwanar’².

I am Lord Vasudeo³ (one of the names of Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation, signifying his lordship over all the essential elements in Nature, called the Vasus of which there are eight in number, created to help sustain the forthcoming creation).

I am the cosmic eye of the whole world (Vishwa Chakshu) by which it sees everything. [This refers to the consciousness that uniformly resides in the bosom of all living creatures. It is this consciousness that injects life and awareness in their gross body. Without consciousness, the body would not be able to ‘see’ any thing. The word ‘see’ is a symbolic way of saying that the body lives and becomes aware of the existence of this world and its myriad creatures due to the presence of this single factor called consciousness or Atma inside it, because only a living body ‘sees’ and not a dead body. The word ‘see’ also means that the conscious factor present inside the body always warns the creatures and endeavours to show the right path to the creature and prevents him from going wayward. This is called the ‘inner voice of the conscious’ which tells one not to follow the unrighteous and inauspicious path. Refer last stanza of verse no. 94.] (103).

[Note--¹The word *Vibho* means ‘one who is omniscient, omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal, almighty, omnipotent, majestic and powerful Lord of all’.

It is an epithet usually used to describe the virtues of Lord Vishnu who is regarded as being synonymous with both Brahm, the attributeless and infinite Supreme Being who had manifested as Narayan, as well as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of this creation. He is also called the ‘Chief Purush’, the virtual commander-in-chief of this creation or the President of the institution known as creation. Whether a male or a female occupies these high seats of power, the terms commander-in-chief and president are applicable to them both.

(ii) ‘Vibho’ refers to Brahm while the word ‘Purush’ refers to Lord Vishnu in the form of Viraat Purush. It is due to the joint efforts of Brahm and the Viraat Purush that this creation has come into being.

(iii) The meaning of the word *Vibho* depends upon the context in which it is used. For example, in Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 68, and Canto 7, verse no. 36 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, it is the Atma that is called the *Vibho* for it possesses and exhibits all the glorious virtues of Brahm. Earlier, verse no. 67 of this Canto calls the Atma as a manifestation of Vasudeo, one of the names of Vishnu. When these two verses are read together, the inference becomes obvious—that is, the word is applicable to any entity that exhibits the divine and glorious virtues that characterize the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being and Lord of creation. Here, both the Atma as well as Vishnu are honoured by the title of *Vibhu*.

²The Vaishwanar—the word *Vaishwanar* has many connotations as follows — (i) It is the fire used in sacrificial rituals. (ii) The microcosmic pure consciousness that resides inside the body of the creature, providing it with life, vitality and energy which helps it to digest food. (iii) Vedanta says that it is the pure consciousness that is a fraction of the Supreme Consciousness, and it resides in the body of the creature even as the Supreme Consciousness

resides in the macrocosmic vast body of Nature or creation. It is representative of the supreme, transcendental entity that is the Lord and the primary cause and the governing authority of the whole creation. (iv) Since the creatures have myriad forms, it has as many forms as the creatures themselves, incorporating all of them in it. Hence, it is also called 'Viraat Purush' (which means the vast, colossus, all incorporating, all-pervading, almighty form of the microcosmic Atma of the creature as well as the macrocosmic Atma of the creation; it is measureless, infinite and eternal). This is the subtle form of 'Vaishwanar'. (v) The gross manifestations of this 'Vaishwanar' is the 'Annamaya Kosh' or the food sheath which is one of the five sheaths enclosing the Atma of the creature. This is because, as the Vaishwanar Agni (fire), it helps in digestion of food. (vi) Its state of existence is defined as the 'waking state of consciousness'. (vii) The word also means —relating to or belonging to all men, omnipresent, known and worshipped everywhere, universal, general, common, complete, immutable, full in number, a collective noun for all the Gods, one who is all commanding and almighty.

(b) The *Vaishwanar Fire (Agni)*—The legendary 'fire element' has a very prominent place in the scriptures. The Fire God or *Agni* appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda—1/1; 1/12; 4/5; 5/1; 6/7-9; 7/1, 3-6; 12-13; 8/1, 23, 39; 10/1-7; 12/1-122 etc.; in Sam Veda—1-51; 53-55 etc.; in Yajur Veda—1/5; 2/4; 7/24; 18/72 etc.; and in Atharva Veda—6/119; 8/3; 12/3.

Since it was the first born amongst the various Gods, it was called 'Agni' meaning the one who comes first, that which precedes others. It is the inherent 'fire' element present in all the living creatures that distinguish them from non-living creatures. It is all-pervading and omnipresent, and infuses life to all the creatures (Kaushitaki Brahmin, 4/3; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahmin 9, verse no.1). This fire helps in digestion of food (Shatpath Brahmin, 148/10/1).

He is the foremost amongst the Gods worshipped on earth (Shatpath Brahmin, 6/1/1/11). He is compared to the Sun in the heavens. He has 7 tongues representing the 7 colours of the rays of the Sun or the colours of light (Rig Veda, 1/146/1; 3/6/2). Since he provides nourishment to the Gods by accepting the offerings made to the sacrificial fire at the time of fire sacrifices, he is deemed to be their sustainer and father (Rig Veda, 1/69/1). Other names of the Fire God called Agni or Agne are the following—Vishwavedus, Kavi, Kavikratu, Jaatvedus, Vaishwaanar, Tanunpat, Matrishwa and Naraashansa. It is believed that he was born from the mouth of the Virrat Purush (Rig Veda 10/90/13).

According to some texts, the fire element has *three* legendary forms—viz. the 'Agni', which is the terrestrial fire on earth represented by the word Bhu, the 'Jatvedas', which is the fire of the sky represented by the word Bhuvaha, and 'Vaishwanar', which is the fire of the heavens represented by the word Swaha (Brihaddevtakaa, 1/67). The term appears in the Rig Veda approx. sixty times and is more often than not synonymous with both life as well as the fire element.

³Vasudeo—These *Vasus* are the various patron Gods who preside over the essentials of life; they are eight in number—Vishnu is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and 'Ray'

representing glory and fame. The element 'Fire' is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the Vasus. The 'fire' element is the active force in creation and is primarily responsible for kindling the cosmic cauldron that set in motion the process, and once having set it in motion it then sustained it and would finally annihilate it by burning it to cinders. On the other hand, Lord Vishnu is the passive force of creation represented by his other form of Viraat Purush which is the primary male aspect of creation. Lord Vishnu, who is the sustainer of the creation, is the Lord of Laxmi who is the Goddess of wealth, and is the supreme creator because Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who created the visible world and its creatures, was himself born atop the divine lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu utilizes the services of Laxmi who is the personification of the active forces of creation to create, sustain and annihilate the world. The Vasus are symbolic Gods who represent those essentials aspects of creation without which life would be difficult to conceive and sustain and finally conclude.

The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following—Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following—Dhruv, Dhar, Som (the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som which is used during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods), Aapha (water), Anil (wind), Anal (fire), Pratush and Prabhas.

These eight Vasus are the semi-Gods who symbolise the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory; to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.]

विश्वाधिकोऽहं विशदो विष्णुर्विश्वकृदस्म्यहम् ।

शुद्धोऽस्मि शुक्लः शान्तोऽस्मि शाश्वतोऽस्मि शिवोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ १०४॥

viśvādhikō'haṁ viśadō viṣṇurviśvakṛdasmyaham ।
śuddhō'smi śukraḥ śāntō'smi śāśvatō'smi śivō'smyaham ॥ 104॥

“Verse no. 104 = I measure more than the dimension of the cosmos or universe; I mean more than what is conventionally and traditionally meant and understood by the word cosmos or the universe. My definition and existence is much far ahead and beyond of what is known as the cosmos or universe. I do not come within their conventional and traditional meaning. I cannot be implied to mean anything coming within the ambit of the known and the unknown cosmos.

I am more huge, more vast and more colossus than the entire Vishwa (cosmos, universe, world at a macrocosmic level). [And that is why I am called the ‘Viraat Purush’.] As such, I am the macrocosmic Lord Vishnu who is the creator and controller of the entire cosmos (creation). [This refers to the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic gross body of the invisible supreme Brahm from whom even the creator of the visible creation, i.e. Brahma the patriarch, was created. This Viraat Purush when he decided to initiate creation assumed the role of Vishnu, and then from his navel emerged the old patriarch of visible creation, i.e. Brahma. The two, Viraat and Vishnu, are interchangeably used. The word ‘Viraat’ literally means vast and colossus, something that has an infinite dimension and implication. Refer verse no. 99.]

I am pure, uncorrupt and immaculate (Shuddha).

I am the auspicious and the life-infusing cosmic sperm that has injected life in the otherwise life and inane cosmos. This cosmic sperm represents the grand and glorious virtues of life such as vitality, vigour, stamina and strength which mark this vibrant and colourful creation. This I do in my role of Vishnu, the creator and nourisher of the creation.

I am an embodiment of the virtues of peace, tranquility, serenity and calmness.

I am eternal, uniform and infinite. I am Shiva (i.e. I am auspicious, righteous, truthful, beautiful, realised, enlightened and renunciate) (104).

सर्वभूतान्तरात्महमहमस्मि सनातनः ।
अहं सकृद्विभातोऽस्मि स्वे महिम्नि सदा स्थितः ॥ १०५॥

sarvabhūtāntarātmahamahamasmi sanātanah ।
ahaṁ sakṛdvibhātō'smi svē mahimni sadā sthitaḥ ॥ 105॥

“Verse no. 105 = I am the Atma that resides in the inner self of all the mortal living beings called Bhuts. I am eternal and omnipresent, being ubiquitous and ever present everywhere at all times. I am traditional, primeval, ancient and primary.

I remain firmly and majestically established, and shine in my own divine glories (105).

सर्वान्तरः स्वयंज्योतिः सर्वाधिपतिरस्म्यहम् ।
सर्वभूताधिवासोऽहं सर्वव्यापी स्वराडहम् ॥ १०६॥

sarvāntaraḥ svayamjyōtiḥ sarvādhīpatirasmyaham ।
sarvabhūtādhivāsō'ham sarvavyāpī svarāḍaham ॥ 106॥

“Verse no. 106 = I reside in the bosom (the inner self) of all the living beings as a fount of light representing their Atma (pure consciousness), and as such I am their Lord. [This is the microcosmic view of the Atma because it pertains to an individual creature.]

All the mortal creatures that have life have their existence in me. [This is the macrocosmic view of the Atma. This statement conforms to the concept of Vedanta that everything in existence is a tiny fraction of the vast cosmos which consists of the body of the supreme Brahm in his manifestation of Viraat Purush much like the individual hair follicles on the body of a man in relation with his entire body.] This is because I am ubiquitous, all-pervading and omnipresent in all spheres of time and eras (106).

समस्तसाक्षी सर्वात्मा सर्वभूतगुहाशयः ।
सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासः सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितः ॥ १०७॥

samastasākṣī sarvātmā sarvabhūtaguhāśayaḥ ।
sarvēndriyaguṇābhāsaḥ sarvēndriyavivarjitaḥ ॥ 107॥

“Verse no. 107 = I am a witness to all; I am a witness for all (refer verse no. 103). I am the Atma which universally lives in all the living beings (as their soul and pure consciousness).

I (pure consciousness) am the mystical entity that is the secret behind all life forms in this mortal world (because without me nothing would live and feel anything).

I bring out and highlight the individuality and the glorious potentials of all the organs of the body (because it is due to my presence in the body that these individual organs perform their designated tasks which are so magnificent and astonishing). But at the same time, I am absolutely separate and distinct from them; I do not have any organ of my own (because I am the ethereal and eternally free Spirit and disembodied cosmic Consciousness which do not have any grossness in them and neither do they need any gross organ to showcase their stupendity and astounding divine glories). [Refer verse no. 98.] (107).

स्थानत्रयव्यतीतोऽहं सर्वानुग्राहकोऽस्म्यहम् ।
सच्चिदानन्द पूर्णात्मा सर्वप्रेमास्पदोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ १०८॥

sthānatrayavyatītō'ham sarvānugrahakō'smyaham ।
saccidānanda pūrṇātmā sarvapremāspadō'smyaham ॥ 108॥

“Verse no. 108 = I transcend the three states of existence of a creature. [These three states are the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleeping state of existence of consciousness, i.e. I am in the fourth state called the Turiya state which is a state of complete bliss and ecstasy. These have been explained in a separate appendix in detail.]

I am gracious, kind, benevolent, munificent and magnanimous towards all.

I am the supreme Parmatma, the Supreme Being and the cosmic Soul of the creation who is eternally and truthfully blissful, joyous and happy (refer verse no. 99, 102). I am dear to all and all are dear to me (108).

सच्चिदानन्दमात्रोऽहं स्वप्रकाशोऽस्मि चिद्गुणः ।
सत्त्वस्वरूपसन्मात्रसिद्धसर्वात्मकोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ १०९॥

saccidānandamātrō'haṁ svaprakāśō'smi cidghanah ।
sattvasvarūpasanmātrasiddhasarvātmakō'smyaham ॥ 109॥

“Verse no. 109 = I am nothing but Anand (bliss, happiness and joy) in its true, undiluted and eternal form (refer verse no. 92, 94, 100).

I am self-illuminated and a treasury as well as a fount of pure consciousness (refer verse no. 99).

I am an embodiment of truth; I am indeed truthful (refer verse no. 96). I possess mystical powers, and therefore I am called a ‘Siddha’.

I am the Atma or soul of all (living beings). [Refer verse no. 106.] (109).

सर्वाधिष्ठानसन्मात्रः स्वात्मबन्धहरोऽस्म्यहम् ।
सर्वग्रासोऽस्म्यहं सर्वद्रष्टा सर्वानुभूरहम् ॥ ११०॥

sarvādhiṣṭhānasanmātraḥ svātmabandhaharō'smyaham ।
sarvagrāsō'smyaham sarvadraṣṭā sarvānubhūraham ॥ 110॥

“Verse no. 110 = I am like a base and foundation for all living beings (because no one can live without the Atma or consciousness and Pran or the vital spark of life in him).

I am an embodiment of that truth that is established in all of them (as their Atma).

I can cut through all fetters (of ignorance and delusions that have tied the creature to this world of falsehood and illusions) and unshackle all the creatures to provide them with liberation and deliverance (because I am enlightened and wise, I am knowledge and erudition personified, and therefore eminently qualified to do so).

I can devour all that have come into existence (because I am the end of creation and have revealed myself as Lord Shiva, the God of conclusion).

I see and observe all (as I am the supreme Lord of creation and nothing is unknown to me or hidden from me because I am omniscient and all-knowing, I am omnipresent and all-pervading, and therefore nothing happens without my presence and knowledge). [Refer verse no. 84.]

I am the one who experiences everything on behalf of all the creatures (as their conscious Atma or self).

A person who is aware of these facts about me and my truthful nature and form (i.e. about the pure consciousness Atma or soul) is the one who truly a wise Purush (a wise and enlightened man). This is the teaching of this Upanishad (110)."

Section 2.5

The Krishna Yajur Veda, Yogshikha Upanishad

Sub-section 2.5.1: The Krishna Yajur Veda, Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-137:

हंसहंसेति मन्त्रोऽयं सर्वैर्जीवश्च जप्यते ।
गुरुवाक्यात्सुषुम्नायां विपरीतो भवेज्जपः ॥ १३१॥

haṁsahaṁsēti mantrō'yaṁ sarvairjīvaśca japyatē ।
guruvākyaātsuṣumnāyāṁ viparītō bhavējjapaḥ ॥ 131॥

"Canto 1, verse no. 131 = Usually, everyone uses the Mantra 'Hansa-Hansa' to do Japa (repetition). But by the grace of a wise teacher the ascetic realises that the real Mantra that ought to be repeated during the course of Yoga in which the wind rises up in the Sushumna Naadi is 'So-a-ham, So-a-ham'¹ (131).

[Note—Briefly this Mantra means 'That is me'; or 'that supreme transcendental entity in none but me'. The word 'me' refers to the awareness of the pure consciousness and does not refer to the physical gross body of the ascetic. The word 'Hansa' literally means a Swan which is considered as the wisest bird and is used as a metaphor for something that is extremely pure and divine. Hansa is the vehicle of Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and knowledge, as a symbolic iconographic depiction of the fact that the auspicious virtues of enlightenment, wisdom, erudition and possession of truthful knowledge of the reality are borne by an entity that is called Hansa. In the realm of metaphysics, this Hansa refers to the Atma, the pure and conscious 'self' of the creature. That is why this Mantra 'Hansa-Hansa' is same as 'So-a-ham'; the latter is the implied and essential meaning of the Mantra 'Hansa'. Since a Yogi is expected to choose the best and leave aside the not-so-important aspect of anything, he chooses the Mantra 'So-a-ham' over the Mantra 'Hansa'. Refer also to Hanso-panishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, and Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83 and 93 of the Sam Veda.]

सोऽहंसोऽहमिति प्रोक्तो मन्त्रयोगः स उच्यते ।
प्रतीतिर्मन्त्रयोगाच्च जायते पश्चिमे पथि ॥ १३२॥

sō'haṁsō'hamiti prōktō mantrayōgaḥ sa ucyatē ।
pratīirmantrayōgācca jāyatē paścimē pathi ॥ 132॥

“Canto 1, verse no. 132 = [This verse describes what is known as Mantra Yoga.]

The Yoga done by this eclectic Mantra ‘So-a-ham’ is the one which is called ‘Mantra Yoga’. The divine effects of this Mantra is witnessed through the ‘Paschim Dwaar’, the left nostrils (from where the elixir of bliss and happiness, called Amrit, drips and tasted by the ascetic—refer verse no. 127). [In other words, when the ascetic does Pranayam using the left nostril to draw in air, the Mantra which he should use is So-a-ham.] (132).

हकारेण तु सूर्यः स्यात्सकारेणेन्दुरुच्यते ।
सूर्याचन्द्रमसोरैक्यं हठ इत्यभिधीयते ॥ १३३॥

hakārēṇa tu sūryaḥ syātsakārēṇēndurucyatē ।
sūryācandramasōraikyaṁ haṭha ityabhidhīyatē ॥ 133॥

“Canto 1, verse no. 133 = [This verse describes what is known as Hath Yoga.]

‘The letter ‘ha’ of the Mantra So-a-ham stands for the sun and its divine glories. The letter ‘sa’ of the Mantra So-a-ham stands for the moon and its divine glories’—when the ascetic does the full exercise of Yoga with this eclectic understanding and faith, he symbolically establishes a union between these two divine entities because they are part of the same Mantra. Such Yoga is called ‘Hath Yoga’ (133).

[Note—The letter ‘Sa’ is a silent sound made while one draws in breath, i.e. does Purak, and since this is done through the Ida Naadi, also called the Moon Naadi passing thorough the left nostril, it represents the Moon God. On the other hand, the letter ‘Ha’ is the silent sound made while exhaling breath through the Pingla Naadi, called the Surya Naadi passing through the right nostrils, and hence it stands for the Sun God. In other words, the letter ‘Sa’ is the Mantra for the Moon God and ‘Ha’ is the Mantra for the Sun God. During the Kumbhak phase of Pranayam, both exhalation and inhalation are stopped and a mixing of the air takes place inside the body. This would be tantamount to bringing together of the Moon and the Sun. The Sun is hot while the Moon is cool; therefore this process neutralizes them both and brings about evenness and homogeneity. All restlessness, agitation, state of flux and fidgeting are stopped. A state of profound calmness and serenity is established. This process of doing Pranayam by inhaling through the left nostril symbolising the Moon God and exhaling through the right nostril symbolising the Sun God has been

outlined in Krishna Yajur Veda's Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 9-17. It is called 'Saraswati Chaalan'.]

हठेन ग्रस्यते जाड्यं सर्वदोषसमुद्भवम् ।
क्षेत्रज्ञः परमात्मा च तयोरैक्यं यदा भवेत् ॥ १३४॥

haṭhēna grasyatē jāḍyaṁ sarvadōṣasamudbhavam ।
kṣētrajñāḥ paramātmā ca tayōraikyaṁ yadā bhavēt ॥ 134॥

“Canto 1, verse no. 134 = When a union between the individual Atma (soul) of the practitioner of Yoga, called the ‘Kshetragya’¹, and the Parmatma (the supreme Soul) is brought about by this practice of Hath Yoga², then this Yoga eliminates the very cause of all spiritual and other problems that have been tormenting the ascetic till now³ (134).

[Note—¹The word *Kshetragya* means one who is the Lord of a particular realm and knows about everything there; he is responsible for everything being done in his realm and is almost like a commander or magistrate for that area. Since the Atma, or the pure conscious soul of a person is the supreme authority as far as that individual person is concerned, it is not only responsible for what that person does but is the true identity of that person much like the magistrate or the commander represents the king or the government in his person and all his actions are deemed to be done on behalf of the king or the government though he is an independent person.

²The *Hath Yoga* is the Yoga that teaches how to bring about the union of Pran (the breath, the vital wind that resides in the upper part of the body) and the Apaana (the wind that moves down in the body and helps in digestion and excretion, the vital wind that lives in the lower part of the body) by means of strict following of the eight fold path of Yoga such as observance of Yam, Niyam, Aasan, Pranayam, Pratyahar, Dharna, concentration and visualization of the presence of the Supreme Being in the point of the forehead where the root of the nose meets the middle of the eyebrows, and Samadhi. It teaches the practical aspects of spiritual Yoga and includes various exercises—Bandhs, Aasans, Mudras and Pranyam.

³The union of the individual soul and the supreme Soul is the main spiritual objective of Yoga. It therefore strives to bring about a meeting of the Kshetragya and the Parmatma. All problems that the creature faces is due to the fact that it has forgotten its high pedigree and origin; it has forgotten that it is the Supreme Being personified. This is because the pure consciousness of the individual and the cosmic consciousness is the one and the same, albeit viewed on different scales—the former is at the micro level while the latter is at the macro level of existence. Had the creature been aware of this basic tenet, there would have been no question of it getting bogged down and entangled in worldly delusions and their attendant problems. To remove this apparent artificial dichotomy is the main spiritual purpose of Yoga. As has been outlined in note of verse no. 124, 133 above, this union is symbolically brought about in the Kumbhak phase when not only the inhaled and exhaled

winds but all other vital winds present inside the body are mixed and homogenized into one ‘air element’. This removes artificial distinctions between them and a universal harmony is established in their functioning. This unification is symbolised as a union between the Atma and the Parmatma.]

तदैक्ये साधिते ब्रह्मंश्चितं याति विलीनताम् ।
पवनः स्थैर्यमायाति लययोगोदये सति ॥ १३५॥

tadaikyē sādhitē brahmaṁścittaṁ yāti vilīnatām ।
pavanaḥ sthairyamāyāti layayōgōdayē sati ॥ 135॥

“Canto 1, verse no. 135 = Persistent and consistent practice of Hath Yoga results in Laya Yoga¹, i.e. it helps in the merger and dissolution of the individual soul of the creature, called the Jiva, with the supreme Soul of creation known as Brahm; it helps to bring about oneness between them. The Chitta (the sub-conscious mind and its power to think, remember and act as a referral bank of the intellect) dissolves in the Atma, and the vital winds in the body lose their inherent restlessness and become calm and quietened² (135).

[Note--¹The word ‘Laya’ means merger and getting dissolved. Hence, *Laya Yoga* refers to the merger of the individual soul with the supreme Soul of creation as described in verse no. 134 above. Refer also to Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 23 in this context.

²In other words, as meditation and contemplation progresses, the ascetic’s restless mind becomes quiet and calmed down. He enters that phase of Yoga which is called Samadhi, because all his bodily awareness of the external world of sense objectives also ceases in a gradual manner, and with it the restless tendencies of the sense organs. This happens because the sense organs of the body have a natural affinity towards this material world of sensual pleasure and comfort for it (the world) provides these sense organs the opportunity to gratify themselves. The sense organs are not concerned what effect this has on the creature’s long term spiritual interests; they want immediate gratification. Hence, when the mind and its sub-conscious are pulled away from this world, the body naturally becomes quiet and calm. This is symbolised by saying that the vital winds in the body have become calm and quiet, because all efforts of the body are made possible by one or other of these winds.

According to *Subalo Upanishad*, canto 9, verse no. 14 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, there ten winds in the body, and they perform specialized tasks as follows. (1) Pran—this controls eyes and the faculty of sight (verse 1); (2) Apaana—this controls ears and the faculty of hearing (verse 2); (3) Vyan—this controls nose and the faculty of smell (verse 3); (4) Udaan—this controls the tongue and the faculty of taste (verse 4); (5) Saman—this controls the skin and the faculty of touch (verse 5); (6) Vairambh—this controls speech (verse 6); (7) Mukhya—this controls the hands (verse 7); (8) Antarayaam—this controls the legs (verse 8); (9) Prabhanjan—this controls the anus (verse 9); (10) Kurma—this controls the genitals (verse 10); (11) Shyen—this controls the

Mana or the thoughts and emotions (verse 11); (12) Krishna—this controls the discrimination, intellect and wisdom (verse 12); (13) Shwet—this controls Ahankar or the notion of ego, pride, arrogance, vanity etc. (verse 13); (14) Naag—this controls the ‘Chitta’ or the faculty of concentration, memory, sub-conscious, reasoning (verse 14).

Under ordinary circumstances the mind is constantly restless because it is being fed by stimuli received by the sense organs of perceptions and must simultaneously respond to them by ordering the organs of action to act accordingly. By attaining success in Hath Yoga, the physical gross body consisting of both the organs of perception and action is controlled, which in its wake would help to control the mind and its sub-conscious. When Hath Yoga is successfully done, the sense organs are forcibly stopped from being attracted towards the various sense objects of the world; the mind would therefore have no cause to be distracted. This results in obtaining a state of great tranquility, serenity, calmness and quietness. This is another way of saying that the ‘winds have become quietened’ because all the activities of the body are made possible by the winds.

These winds are like the many horses of the king’s royal chariot which together help pull the latter under the control of an expert charioteer. An expert ascetic who has successfully done Hath Yoga is deemed to have established control over these winds by controlling the body and its sense organs. The winds now become one and stop their individual random activities which had hitherto been buffeting the creature’s mind, tossing it in various directions, thereby acting as an impediment in his ability to focus his attention and concentrate his mind on any given task at hand. This is metaphorically indicated by saying that he has established ‘Laya Yoga’ by merging all the different units of his existence and establishing them in one unit called the ‘consciousness’ (the Atma) at the micro level, and with the supreme cosmic consciousness (Brahm) at the macro level. In other words, an expert ascetic who has been successful in controlling his sense organs as well as his mind by doing Hath Yoga has virtually reined in all these winds much like an expert charioteer controls the numerous horses of the king’s chariot. Once this happens, all the winds work in sync with each other, i.e. their independent activities cease and they become one unit which is easy to handle. The harmonized wind or air element can now be focused on spiritual pursuits so that the boat can move ahead without being tossed and kicked around by ever-changing directions of the wind and reach its destination smoothly and with ease. This harmonizing and unification of the various functions of the body which results in its calming down and overcoming of its restlessness is like the case of the chariot moving comfortably and pleasurably if the horses move in a coordinated manner instead of pulling randomly here and there to rock the vehicle, or like the case of a boat whose sails are full of wind blowing in a single direction without changing course frequently and violently.]

तयात्सम्प्राप्यते सौख्यं स्वात्मानंदं परं पदम् ।
 योनिमध्ये महाक्षेत्रे जपाबन्धूकसंनिभम् ॥ १३६॥
 रजो वसति जन्तूनां देवीतत्त्वं समावृतम् ।

रजसो रेतसो योगाद्राजयोग इति स्मृतः ॥ १३७॥

layātsamprāpyatē saukhyaṁ svātmānadaṁ paraṁ padam ।
yōnimadhyē mahākṣētrē japābandhūkasamñibham ॥ 136॥
rajō vasati jantūnām dēvītattvaṁ samāvṛtam ।
rajasō rētasō yōgādrājayōga iti smṛtaḥ ॥ 137॥

“Canto 1, verse nos. 136-137 = The extreme sense ecstasy and a feeling of utter bliss obtained by the union of the Atma and the Parmatma brought about by Hath and Laya Yogas is comparable to the one obtained at the climax of intercourse when the male semen is ejaculated in the female vagina to bring about a union between the male sperm and the female ova (137-137).”

Sub-section 2.5.2: The Krishna Yajur Veda, Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11:

मूलस्वरूपलिङ्गत्वान्मूलमन्त्र इति स्मृतः ।
सूक्ष्मत्वात्कारणात्वाच्च लयनाद्गमनादपि ॥ ९॥

mūlasvarūpaliṅgatvānmūlamantra iti smṛtaḥ ।
sūkṣmatvātkāraṇātvācca layanādgamanādapi ॥ 9॥

“Canto 2, verse no. 9 = Since this Mantra preached by me (i.e. ‘Hansa’ or So-a-ham as narrated in Canto 1, verse no. 131) represents my (Shiva’s) true and essential eclectic conscious form, or it is a personification of the cosmic Shiva principle and represented as a Lingam (a male phallus situated on the Mooladhar Chakra) which is shaped like a elongated root (such as a radish or a carrot), it is called a ‘Mool Mantra’¹—i.e. the root for all Mantras. [The word ‘Mool’ has a dual meaning—it means a ‘root’ as well as the ‘essence or fundamental aspect of anything’. Therefore, the Mantra preached by Shiva represents both his gross symbol of the Lingam as well as his subtle form as cosmic energy and consciousness. In other words, the Mantra ‘Hansa’ has a great spiritual potential.]

This Mantra represents the subtle cause of creation, expansion and development, and the conclusion or dissolution of everything in existence (i.e. it represents Brahm) (9).

लक्षणात्परमेशस्य लिङ्गमित्यभिधीयते ।
संनिधानात्समस्तेषु जन्तुष्वपि च सन्ततम् ॥ १०॥

lakṣaṇātparamēśasya liṅgamityabhidhīyatē ।

samnidhānātsamastēṣu jantuṣvapi ca santatam || 10||

“Canto 2, verse no. 10 = This Mantra represents the supreme Ishwar (the Supreme Being, the Lord of all creation); hence it is his Linga or symbol. [In other words, this Mantra is the subtle body of Ishwar even as the physical Lingam represents his gross symbol.]

It is called Linga¹ also due to the fact that it always lives inside all the living beings as their integral part (known as the Atma, the pure conscious soul). [There is another interpretation of this sentence. The male genital organ is a phallus, called a Linga, and it is an integral part of the body of an ascetic. The location of the symbolic Shiva Lingam inside the body had been depicted as being on the Mooladhar Chakra which is the center of the sexual organs and consists of sensory nerves directly related to this organ. In the female it is represented by the clitoris. So, the symbolism is obvious. It is due to this reproductive organ that the creation has come into being, and with this symbolism it is easy to understand that the male is indeed a personification of Brahm, the eternal cause of everything that exists. When extended to include the female, it follows that she is the Shakti of that Shiva (male) representing Brahm; she is Prakriti and Maya personified as far as an ascetic is concerned.] (10).

[Note—¹Linga—The word ‘Linga’ literally means the gender of any thing or living being, the genitals and especially the male phallus, a sign, a mark, a token, and a symptom or symbol of anything. According to Shankya philosophy, it is the ‘prime nature’, and according to Yoga philosophy it is the Mooladhar Chakra and its phallus-like Kanda (the Nabhi Kand) which together represent the Shiva-Shakti principle. It also stands independently for Shiva, the creative force and divine power of creation, and is depicted as a male cylindrical structure with a dome at the top and an encircling ring at the lower end. This composite symbol is called a Shiva Lingam and it stands for the Shiva-Shakti principle of creation—i.e. for the supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm, the sublime pure consciousness, and its dynamic manifestation known as Shakti which is the energy of this consciousness at work. This combination is known as Brahm and Maya in Vedanta, and as Purush and Prakriti in Shankhya philosophy.

This symbolism of ‘Linga’ to represent Shiva and Shakti principle of creation of the Tantra philosophy both at the subtle level as well at the gross level, which would correspond to Brahm and Maya of Vedanta, or Purush and Prakriti of Shankhya respectively, is employed adroitly in this Upanishad from verse no. 5 onwards to describe in detail its various connotations, especially that which relates to the eclectic Mantra as an ethereal and sound symbol of Shiva as preached by Shiva himself in this Upanishad, and the Mooladhar Chakra and its associated the Mool Kand or Nabhi Kand as another symbol of Shiva-Shakti principle revealed in the body of all persons. These two are the sublime and subtle Lings of Shiva respectively, while the Lingam usually worshipped in the temples is the gross symbol of the same principle. In fact, Canto 1, verse no. 168 of this Yogshikha Upanishad asserts that the Shiva Lingam inside the body is situated on the top of the Mooladhar Chakra itself.

The Mantra preached by Shiva is ‘Hansa-Hansa’ (Canto 1, verse no. 131 of this Upanishad) which is actually a acronym for the full Mantra ‘So-a-ham’ meaning ‘that (Brahm) is me’, and is therefore called a Mool Mantra, or the

‘principle’ of all the Mantras, and it is therefore likened to a ‘Linga’, or a symbol and personification of Shiva principle itself.

It must be noted here that the Mooladhar Chakra is shaped like the concave bowl representing the cosmic womb, and over it is placed the Mool Kanda or the Nabhi Kanda which is shaped like the male phallus. The entire structure represents the Shiva Lingam seen in temples. Verse no. 168 of Canto 1 also points a finger in this direction by saying that a Lingam is placed on the Mooladhar Chakra. This apparatus consisting of the Mooladhar Chakra and the Kanda is located inside the body, and its external symbol is the Shiva Lingam seen in temples. Comparatively, the one inside the body is subtler to the one present as an idol in a temple. Since Yoga is based primarily of Tantra philosophy rather than Vedanta philosophy, emphasis is laid on this symbol to represent Shiva as a personification of the eclectic and glorious virtues of the transcendental supreme entity known in Vedanta as Brahm.

Again, since the pure consciousness is a non-dual, uniform and universally present entity, whether at the level of the individual creature or at the cosmic level, it is this symbolic Linga that is present inside the body which is taken as a representative of Shiva or Brahm.]

सूचकत्वाच्च रूपस्य सूत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
महामाया महालक्ष्मीर्महादेवी सरस्वती ॥ ११॥

sūcakatvācca rūpasya sūtramityabhidhīyatē ।
mahāmāyā mahālakṣmīrmahādēvī sarasvatī ॥ 11॥

“Canto 2, verse no. 11 = It is a symbol of all the forms and manifestations that is taken by the ethereal entity (Shiva principle). [The word ‘it’ refers to the divine Mantra, the Linga representing Shiva principle and pure consciousness at one level and as the cosmic generative powers at the other level, as well as to the Mooladhar Chakra which is the seat of that creative power in the body.]

Hence, it is also called a ‘Sutra’. [The word means a formulae or a secret code by knowing which one can solve great puzzles or questions. This is the main purpose of any Mantra—to unravel the great spiritual secrets to the person who is dedicatedly worshipping his deity with a particular Mantra devoted to this deity so as to unravel the profound mysteries of this cosmic entity. In the present case, this entity is Shiva and his Shakti.]

The Shaktis represented by it are Maha Maya (the great delusion-creating powers of Brahm, here represented by Shiva and his divine consort Parvati), Maha Laxmi (the divine consort of Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation; the second of the Trinity Gods) and Maha Saraswati (the divine consort of Brahm, the creator of the physical world and the Vedas which are the repositories of knowledge that is needed to sustain this world in an orderly way); that is why Saraswati is regarded as the patron Goddess of knowledge and wisdom as well as speech and expertise in any particular field) (11).

[Note—The Gods of the Trinity, viz. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, are simply visualised as the same Brahm performing different functions in its three

distinct forms, a clear case of delegation of authority at the cosmic level. Since Brahm is a neutral entity and its dynamism is revealed in the form of Shakti or cosmic energy, these three Goddesses are the three counterparts of the same universal Shakti that enables Brahm to carry out what it wishes. In Brahm's manifestation as the creator and settler of this creation in the form of Brahma, this Shakti assumes the role of Saraswati who empowers Brahma with the requisite knowledge so that he can actually set about his assigned task of creation which is a very technically complicated and intricate job. Likewise, Vishnu needs material wealth to sustain this creation, to feed it and look after its upkeep, so the Shakti is envisioned as Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. Shiva is responsible for conclusion, and this indirectly means that things really come to a head when its sustenance and perpetuation becomes impossible, there is intrigue, infighting and strife, and the creation eats itself out like a parasite. Thus, Parvati is the patron Goddess representing Maya because delusions and ignorance are the basic cause for tussle leading to destruction in this world.]”

Sub-section 2.5.3: The Krishna Yajur Veda, Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 35-36, 52-54:

गमागमस्थं गमनादिशून्यं चिद्रूपदीपं तिमिरान्धनाशम् ।
पश्यामि तं सर्वजानान्तरस्थं नमामि हंसं परमात्मरूपम् ॥ २०॥

gamāgamasthaṁ gamanādisūnyaṁ cidrūpadīpaṁ timirāndhanāśam ।
paśyāmi taṁ sarvajanāntarasthaṁ namāmi haṁsaṁ paramātmārūpaṁ ॥
20॥

“Canto 6, verse no. 20 = An enlightened ascetic should contemplate thus—‘I bow reverentially to the supreme transcendental Soul which resides in the bosom of all the living creatures, who continuously arrive and depart from this mortal world in an endless cycle of birth and death, in the form of a ‘Hansa’, literally a divine Swan but used as a metaphor for the pure consciousness that forms the Atma or the true self of all living beings. This Atma which is as pure as the Swan is distinct from the creature because it remains steady and constant, without arriving or departing from anywhere.

This Hansa does not get involved in worldly activities and it is the illuminator of the mind-intellect complex, thereby being the destroyer of the darkness caused by ignorance and its attendant delusions.

[That is, the pure consciousness provides the mind-intellect complex with the necessary wherewithal to gain enlightenment, erudition and wisdom. If the creature allows the mind-intellect complex to work under the overall guidance and control of its consciousness, it would be self illuminated in the sense that it would be enlightened and wise, but if it allows the mind-intellect to be dominated by the enchanting inputs gathered by the sense organs from the external world of sense objects which are notorious for their deluding affects and the bait that they throw to

trap the creature in their snare, the creature would be engulfed in a horrifying veil of darkness symbolising ignorance and delusions.] (20).

सुषुम्नायां यदा हंसस्त्वथ ऊर्ध्वं प्रधावति ।
 सुषुम्नायां यदा प्राणं भ्रामयेद्यो निरन्तरम् ॥ ३५॥
 सुषुम्नायां यदा प्राणः स्थिरो भवति धीमताम् ।
 सुषुम्नायां प्रवेशेन चन्द्रसूर्यौ लयं गतौ ॥ ३६॥

suṣumnāyām yadā haṁsastvadha ūrdhvaṁ pradhāvati ।
 suṣumnāyām yadā prāṇaṁ bhrāmayēdyō nirantaram ॥ 35॥
 suṣumnāyām yadā prāṇaḥ sthirō bhavati dhīmatām ।
 suṣumnāyām pravēśēna candrasūryau layaṁ gatau ॥ 36॥

“Canto 6, verse no. 35-36 = As long as the living being represented by the Hansa (i.e. the pure consciousness known as the Atma which metaphorically is represented by the Swan or Hansa and which is the true identity of the creature) continuous to move up and down in the Sushumna Naadi, he is deemed to remain trapped in the cycle of birth and death.

On the contrary, when his Pran becomes steady in the Sushumna Naadi it acquires sufficient power and energy to break through the barrier of the sun and moon (35-36).

[Note—The ‘sun’ is represented by the Pingla Naadi or the right nostril, and the ‘moon’ by the Ida Naadi or the left nostril. The implication of the statement is that the breathing stops through the nostrils during the Kumbhak phase of Pranayam. During this state, the Pran wind is incarcerated in the body which acts like a closed pitcher (Kumbha), and subsequently it makes its exit not through the routine path of the nostrils but through the Brahm Randhra in the top of the skull. As it is obvious here, if the Pran exits through the nostrils as during normal breathing process, it is bound to oscillate between inhalation and exhalation, while if it goes out through the Brahm Randhra its exit would be final. The former would be tantamount to taking birth and death repeatedly, while the latter would be his final Moksha or Mukti.

It is a very interesting analogy here which can be interpreted in a different way also. The ‘sun’ stands for the day when one is involved in all sorts of physical activities involving the body and the material world which is visible and tangible. On the other hand, the ‘moon’ is a metaphor for the night when people sleep and the external world and its activities become irrelevant. The day is like ‘birth’ when the soul gets involved in this world, and the night is like ‘death’ when the same soul withdraws from the external world and becomes unconcerned with it. The day is comparable to the ‘waking state of consciousness’ and the night to the ‘sleeping state of consciousness’.

In other words, as long as the Pran continues to move in and out of the body through the process of breathing, it would not allow the body to die and this process would metaphorically indicate that the ascetic continues to be moving in an endless cycle of birth and death. But if he wants to break free

from this cycle, he would have to learn to control his breath, or in other words, learn to exercise self restraint. Once he is successful in this, the Pran would make its exit but not come back. That is, the Pran would now move *not* through the Ida or Pingla Naadis in and out of the left or the right nostrils respectively but would rather enter the Sushumna Naadi and go straight up to the head and escape through the Brahm Randhra. If ‘exit of the Pran from the body is taken to be death’ then this one-way passage of Pran through the Brahm Randhra would be the ‘final death’ of the body of the ascetic, thereby setting his pure conscious Atma free from the fetters of the gross body. This would be tantamount to his breaking free from the cycle of birth and death as well, or piercing through the sun and moon complex. This is because the sun and the moon symbolically indicate this world consisting of an endless cycle of day and night. This is his ‘Kaivalya Mukti’.

By practicing Pranayam the ascetic learns to control his breath and force his Pran, which has already entered the Sushumna Naadi by doing various Aasans and Mudras of Yoga, to move past the nostrils and reach the top of the head from where it would make its exit by the way of the Brahm Randhra. In other words, if the ascetic allows his Pran to move in and out through the nostrils, his body would be kept alive and his Atma would remain trapped in this body as well as the world. But when he becomes an expert in the practice of Yoga and stops the flow of breath through the nostrils by doing Pranayam, the only way the heated and activated wind can escape from his body would be the Brahm Randhra. Once the Pran leaves through this path, it would not be able to re-enter the body. This is a one way exit for the Pran as compared to the exit through the body under normal breathing process. Therefore, while the former would provide a permanent liberation from the body, the latter would symbolically mean going out (dying) during exhalation and coming back from where one has gone out, i.e. inhalation (taking birth again and entering a new body). Refer verse no. 51 of this Canto 6. The movement of the life consciousness in the different Naadis so as to keep the body alive and active in all planes of existence has been described in Paingalo Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 12, and Dhyān Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 52-60.]

The Yogshikha Upanishad describes in Canto 6, verse nos. 52-54 how the creature continues to do an involuntary Japa using the Mantra ‘Hansa’ throughout his life while narrating how the creature continues to be buffeted and tossed around by the vital winds called Pran and Apaana. To quote—

आक्षिप्तो भुजदण्डेन यथोच्चलति कन्दुकः ।
प्राणापानसमाक्षिप्तस्तथा जीवो न विश्रमेत् ॥ ५२॥

ākṣiptō bhujadaṇḍēna yathōccalati kandukaḥ ।
prāṇāpānasamākṣiptastathā jīvō na viśramēt ॥ 52॥

“Canto 6, verse no. 52 = Even as a ball tossed around by the hand never finds rest, the Jiva (the living creature represented by the consciousness present inside a gross body

but usually understood to mean the physically visible body of the living being) never finds rest as it is incessantly and persistently tossed up and down by the Pran and the Apaan winds (52).

अपानः कर्षति पूरणं पूरणोऽपानं च कर्षति ।
हकारेण बहिर्याति सकारेण विशेत्पुनः ॥ ५३॥

apānaḥ karṣati prāṇam prāṇō'pānam ca karṣati ।
hakārēṇa bahiryāti sakārēṇa viśētpunaḥ ॥ 53॥

“Canto 6, verse no. 53 = These two winds, i.e. the Pran and Apaan act to pull each other in the opposite direction. That is, the Pran pulls the Apaan in the upper direction, and the Apaan pulls the Pran in the lower direction.

This is metaphorically depicted by the two letters of the Mantra ‘Hansa’, viz. ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’. In other words, the Jiva (consciousness) tries to go up and escape from the body while making the sound of the letter ‘Ha’, and then is pulled down back inside the body while making the sound ‘Sa’. (53).

हंसहंसेत्यमुं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा ।
तद्विद्वानक्षरं नित्यं यो जानाति स योगवित् ॥ ५४॥

haṁsahaṁsētyamum mantraṁ jīvō japati sarvadā ।
tadvidvānakṣaram nityam yō jānāti sa yōgavit ॥ 54॥

“Canto 6, verse no. 54 = In this way, the Jiva (i.e. all living beings who breathe, for example a man) repeats this Mantra ‘Hansa-Hansa’ involuntarily while alive. But few understand its metaphysical and spiritual import. On the other hand, those ascetics who are able to grasp the great importance and significance of this eternal and imperishable divine Mantra are indeed wise, erudite, self-realised and enlightened ascetics. [Their entire life is spent in doing involuntary Japa, which is repeating of a divine Mantra and reaping its spiritual benefits, even without making any special efforts do repeat it and obtain its natural spiritual reward.] (54).”

Section 2.6

The Krishna Yajur Veda, Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 98-102:

Krishna Yajur Veda tradition's Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 98-102 say:

आभूमध्यातु मूर्धान्तमाकाशस्थानमुच्यते ।
व्योम वृत्तं च धूमं च हकाराक्षराभ्यासुरम् ॥ ९८॥

ābhrūmadhyāttu mūrdhāntamākāśasthānamucyatē ।
vyōma vṛttaṁ ca dhūmraṁ ca hakārākṣarabhāsuram ॥ 98॥

“Verse no. 98 = The sky element is located between the point midway of the two eyebrows and the top of the head. It is shaped like the sky (i.e. featureless, measureless and like an inverted parabolic transparent dish or bowl), is of the colour of smoke, and its seed or root Mantra is the Sanskrit letter ‘Ha’ (as in ‘hut’). It is illuminated with a diffused light like the sky is during the daytime (98).

आकाशे वायुमारोप्य हकारोपरि शङ्करम् ।
बिन्दुरूपं महादेवं व्योमाकारं सदाशिवम् ॥ ९९॥

ākāśe vāyumārōpya hakārōpari śaṅkaram ।
bindurūpaṁ mahādēvaṁ vyōmākāraṁ sadāśivam ॥ 99॥

“Verse no. 99 = The ascetic should inject the air or wind element into this sky element, and fill it with it, visualizing that Lord Shankar (Shiva) is present here, seated on the letter ‘Ha’¹. This Lord is a personification of the great Lord of all the Gods, and hence also known as Mahadeva², literally the great God. This Mahadeva is like a dot or point³ on the one hand, and like the vast, endless, featureless and infinite sky⁴ on the other hand. In the latter form he is known as Sada Shiva⁵, i.e. the eternal and ever-present Lord Shiva (99).

[Note—¹There is a lot of brilliant symbolism here. The letter ‘Ha’ is the first letter of the word ‘Hansa’, meaning the divine swan. This bird is said to be very clean and wise, and therefore is the vehicle of the goddess of learning and wisdom, goddess Saraswati. By saying that the patron Lord of the sky element sits on this letter ‘Ha’, it is meant that this Lord is wisdom, erudition, learning and knowledge personified, he has full command over them. Hence he is the supreme Brahm.

²By this logic, Shankar is another name of Brahm. Since Brahm is the one from whom the entire creation has emerged, he is the greatest of all the Gods and their Lord, hence he is called Mahadeva. Thus, Mahadeva and Shankar become interchangeable and synonymous.

³The origin of the creation was due to a vibration in the cosmic primordial gel much like ripples on the surface of a calm lake. This generated waves and these waves created energy to power the initial phases of the process of creation. But the vibration must have started from one single point. This is the ‘dot’ referred in this verse. It also refers to the fact that everything in existence has its origin from one ‘point’ source known as Brahm. The concept of Bindu and ‘dot’ have been explained in Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 37, 39-40, and Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 1, 5 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

⁴Now, this Brahm is not limited to one single point, but it spread as far and wide as the vast sky could spread. It was diffused in the sky like smoke, and that is why the colour of the sky element is symbolically depicted to be like that of the smoke.

⁵‘Shiva’ means someone who is auspicious, truthful and beautiful, and ‘Sada’ means one who is always the same, is constant, perpetual, consistent, ever-present, uniform and universal. All these qualities are present in the supreme Brahm. That is why the latter is called Sada Shiva.

So in a nutshell, Shankar and Shiva is the same great God who is the Lord of all the Gods as well as of the rest of the creation, i.e. the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being, personified, besides possessing all the qualities of wisdom, erudition, sagacity, knowledge, expertise, various skills etc. personified by goddess Saraswati riding on the Hansa.]

शुद्धस्फटिकसङ्काशं धृतबालेन्दुमौलिनम् ।
पञ्चवक्त्रयुतं सौम्यं दशबाहुं त्रिलोचनम् ॥ १००॥

śuddhasphaṭikasaṅkāśaṁ dhṛtabālēndumaulinam ।
pañcavaktrayutaṁ saumyaṁ daśabāhuṁ trilōcanam । ॥ 100॥

“Verse no. 100 = This Lord Shiva is most holy, divine, pure and immaculate, and as clear and clean as pure crystal. He has a crescent moon tucked in the lock of hairs on his head. He has five mouths, is very sober, gentle and pleasant, and has ten arms and three eyes (100).

[Note—Since Lord Shiva is the patron God of Yogis or those ascetics who do Yoga, especially those who practice its exercises and rituals as propounded by Patanjali, and this Upanishads deals with Yoga, the supreme transcendental Supreme Being known as Brahm of metaphysics and Upanishads is personified here in him.

Lord Shiva has been depicted in the Purans as having a *crescent moon* on his forehead. The moon is said to have sixteen Kalaas or phases, symbolising the sixteen Kalaas or aspects out of the total of sixty four Kalaas of the supreme Brahm. These sixteen Kalaas represent the visible world which is one fourth part of the entire creation consisting of the remaining of the Kalaas of Brahm. The visible world is called ‘one Pada’ or one leg or one aspect or Kalaa of Brahm. So, Shiva is the Lord who presides over the entire visible part of creation, and this world is his ornamentation in the sense that the Lord appears to be so beautiful if we consider the beauty of Nature as the astounding beauty and the expert craftsmanship of Shiva on display.

The *five heads* of Shiva stand for the ‘Panch Vyom’ or the five forms that the sky element is said to have. According to Vedanta, the concept of the *sky* or ‘Akash’ has many connotations. According to one interpretation, there are *five* subtle skies representing the space surrounding the five sheaths or *Koshas* present in the body of a creature. They are the sheaths that surround the Atma and are called ‘Panch Akash’. These are the following—(1) the Food Sheath called Anna Maye Kosh; (2) the Vital Air Sheath called Pran Maye Kosh; (3)

the Mental Sheath called Manomaye Kosh; (4) the Intellectual Sheath called Vigyan Maye Kosh; and (5) the Bliss Sheath called Anand Maye Kosh. Ref.-- Mudgal Upanishad, 4/5 of the Rig Veda.

The *ten arms* of Shiva stand for the ten forms of the subtle sky element. They are the following—(1) Ghatakash—the space inside a hollow pot; (2) Mathakash—the space inside a holy building, such as a holy shrine, a monastery, an abbey etc.; (3) Hridayakash—the subtle space inside the heart; (4) Akash—the vacant or blank space above the earth; (5) Suryakash—the space of the solar system; the space around the sun, or the solar system illuminated by the light of the sun; (6) Paraakash—the space above or beyond the solar system, it is said to burn with the celestial fire; (7) Mahakash—the great sky that is aglow with divine illumination, the heaven; that space which is radiant with a divine glow; (8) Paramakash—the supreme sky beyond the Mahakash, it is said to be very magnificent and encloses everything that exists, including all the other skies; that space which is illuminated, all pervading, all encompassing and full of bliss and felicity; (9) Tattwakash—the elementary space that is at the core of the concept of space, or the space that surrounds the basic elements of creation; by natural corollary it refers to the subtle, sublime, ethereal and supreme space where the eternal, transcendental Brahm has his abode because Brahm is the cause of all the basic elements of creation; there is complete beatitude and felicity there; that space which surrounds the essential truth known as Brahm; and (10) Anatariksha—the physical space where stars are present in deep space; the inter-galactic space. Besides these, there is one more space called ‘Swarga’ which means heaven or the Duloka.

These skies have been ascribed different names just to facilitate understanding, and not because any one form of sky is fundamentally different from the other. For example, the space present inside the mud-pot, called the Ghata-kash, is the same as the space present outside the body of the pot. When the pot is broken, the demarcation wall of the body of the pot is removed, and both the space inside and outside of the erstwhile pot become indistinguishably and inseparably the same. Therefore, the various names are artificial and misnomers.

The *three eyes* consist of two normal conventional eyes and the third eye of wisdom and deep insight.]

सर्वायुधैर्धृताकारं सर्वभूषणभूषितम् ।

उमार्धदेहं वरदं सर्वकारणकारणम् ॥ १०१॥

sarvāyudhairdhṛtākāraṁ sarvabhūṣaṇabhūṣitam ।

umārdhadēhaṁ varadaṁ sarvakāraṇakāraṇam ॥ 101॥

“Verse no. 101 = That Lord Shiva is armed with all types of weapons (as a symbol of protection against or to counter all sorts of worldly evils and faults that might attack a spiritual aspirant and attempt to pull him down from the exalted position that he has acquired by so hard effort). He is also decorated with numerous ornaments (as a symbol of his divine beauty and magnificence, as a token of his natural charm and a pleasant and appealing appearance). Goddess Parvati his divine consort and she literally is his other half. [That is, if Shiva is the supreme Brahm or Supreme Being,

Parvati is his Prakriti and Maya. If Shiva is the Viraat Purush, Parvati is Mother Nature.] He is the one who grants boons and is the root and primary cause of all conceivable causes and reasons that exist in this world (101).

आकाशधारणात्तस्य स्वेचरत्वं भवेद्भुवम् ।
यत्कुत्र स्थितो वापि सुखमत्यन्तमश्नुते ॥ १०२॥

ākāśadhāraṇāttasya khēcaratvaṁ bhavēddhruvam ।
yatra kutra sthitō vāpi sukhamatyantamaśnutē । ॥ 102॥

“Verse no. 102 = If that Lord Shiva is meditated upon as a personification of the sky element and as being inherently present in this element, it is certain that the practitioner is able to acquire the mystical powers to move through the sky (like a bird or other sky-borne creatures).

By this meditation, the spiritual aspirant feels an immense sense of satisfaction and happiness no matter where he lives¹ (102).

[Note--¹This is because he feels the freedom to move about any where he likes, and is not constrained to the earth. Another interpretation is that he feels as light as the air or wind element because this is the only element that fills the entire space of the sky and can move in at its will. He feels unrestrained and free like the bird. He also feels untainted, unblemished, un-faulted and untarnished like the pure and colourless sky element. He feels infinite, vast, open, eternal and imperishable as the sky element. He feels himself as being all-pervading, omnipresent and all-covering just like the sky element. This notion and feeling would naturally be spiritually and emotionally uplifting and morale boosting for him; he would feel elated and accomplished.]

Section 2.7

The Krishna Yajur Veda, Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 52, 54-55:

Krishna Yajur Veda tradition’s Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 52, 54-55 describe the Hansa Mantra besides asserting that the Atma is Hansa (the most immaculate, divine, supreme and transcendental Brahm) personified—i.e. the Atma is pure, uncorrupt, wise and erudite like the divine Swan. Now let us examine what it says on the subject—

यस्मादुत्पद्यते बिन्दुर्यस्मान्नादः पूर्वर्धते ।
यस्मादुत्पद्यते हंसो यस्मादुत्पद्यते मनः ॥ ५२॥

yasmādupadyatē binduryasmānnādaḥ pravardhatē ।
yasmādupadyatē hamsō yasmādupadyatē manaḥ ॥ 52॥

“Canto 5, Verse no. 52 = The practitioner also hears the subtle sound of breath coming in and going out of the nostrils, the sound that resembles the nasal sounds made by silently hissing the two letters ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ of the Sanskrit alphabet. The combined effect of continuously hearing these two sounds in a cyclic manner as the practitioner exhales and inhales breath is the formation of the word ‘Hansa’ which means ‘a divine Swan’.

[In other words, by continuously practicing Yoga, a stage is reached when the spiritual aspirant realises that he has obtained an exalted spiritual stature and has been successful in his endeavour of doing Yoga. This achievement is indicated by the fact that his sub-conscious mind hums and constantly reminds him that he is as pure and holy as the Swan—the ‘Hansa’. This word is also used as a Mantra. Refer Hansopanishad, verse no. 5-15, Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 59-63, and Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 31-35, 82-83, 93.]

From this arises the Mana (i.e. the desire and inclination of the mind to enjoy the bliss and ecstasy that comes with experiencing the pure conscious ‘self’ or Atma, in all its glory and magnificence, during meditation) (52).

नाडीनामाश्रयः पिण्डो नाड्यः प्राणस्य चाश्रयः ।
जीवस्य निलयः प्राणो जीवो हंसस्य चाश्रयः ॥ ५४॥

nāḍīnāmāśrayaḥ piṇḍō nāḍyaḥ prāṇasya cāśrayaḥ ।
jīvasya nilayaḥ prāṇō jīvō hamsasya cāśrayaḥ ॥ 54॥

“Canto 5, Verse no. 54 = The Naadis have their base or foundation in the Kanda or Pinda (literally a ‘ball or egg like structure’).

These Naadis are the base for the various Prans or vital winds that sustain and protect the body.

[This is because if these Naadis do not carry consciousness or life-impulses to all corners of the body, the latter would die. The Pran is a word used to indicate ‘life’ and not death. Therefore, as long as a creature is alive, it is deemed that the Naadis have Pran flowing and pulsating in them. Refer also to verse no. 28 and 31.]

These Prans are the basis of life in all Jivas or living beings.

[Pran is a synonym for the wind or air element that helps sustain life on earth. No living being would survive if there was no air on earth.]

And the Jiva is the abode for the Hansa, i.e. the pure consciousness known as the immaculate and wise Atma that resides in the body of the living being called the Jiva. [The Atma is the true self of the creature, and the body is merely its habitat.] (54).

हंसः शक्तेरधिष्ठानं वराचरमिदं जगत् ।
निर्विकल्पः प्रसन्नात्मा प्राणायां समभ्यसेत् ॥ ५५॥

haṁsaḥ śaktēradhiṣṭhānaṁ carācaramidaṁ jagat ।
nirvikalpaḥ prasannātmā prāṇāyāṁ samabhyasēt ॥ 55॥

“Canto 5, Verse no. 55 = This Hansa (the Atma; the pure consciousness) is the divine and sublime entity which provides the ‘Shakti’, the dynamic force, the basic energy, the vitality, the strength and the vigour that sustains and protects the entire edifice of this creation consisting of both the animate and the inanimate world.

[Here the animate world refers to the creatures that have mobility, i.e. members of the entire zoological kingdom, and inanimate world is the immobile forms of life such as trees and other members of the plant kingdom.]

An ascetic should have no doubts and be free from all confusions and consternations in this regard. [This way he would be able to concentrate upon meditation and contemplation.]

He should be cheerful, and practice Pranayam (breath control exercises) carefully and diligently (55).

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Chapter 3

The Upanishad of the Sam Veda, Yogchudamani Upanishad,

Verse nos. 31-35, 82-83, 93:

हकारेण बहिर्याति सकारेण विशेत्पुनः ।
हंसहंसेत्यमुं मात्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा ॥ ३१॥

hakārēṇa bahiryāti sakārēṇa viśētpunaḥ ।
haṁsahaṁsētyamuṁ matraṁ jīvō japati sarvadā । ॥ 31॥

“Verse no. 31 = The breath, when inhaled, creates a sound vibration resembling the Hindi/Sanskrit alphabet ‘Sa’, and when it is exhaled, it produces a sound vibration equivalent to the alphabet ‘Ha’. In this way, while exhaling and inhaling, a person or a creature (the living being) unconsciously, automatically, un-perceptibly, by nature and even without being aware of doing it or wishing to do it, continues to incant or chant or repeat the Mantra formed by these two alphabets —which are ‘Ha+Sa = Hansa’ (literally meaning a divine swan which is considered the most wise and purest form of bird)¹. [Also refer to verse nos. 82-83 in this context.]

[Note—¹ The bird Swan, known as the ‘Hansa’, is considered the most pure, clean, wise, erudite and clever among the birds. It is said to eat pearls, which means it picks up and accepts only the best amid the variety of things available to it in the form of an assortment of various gems and jewels. It is also reputed to drink milk leaving aside the water content in it. It is also the vehicle of Goddess Saraswati, the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, speech and learning. Hence, the reference to a swan while describing a creature conscious of the vital wind or Pran passing through him means the basic, inherent and intrinsic tendency of that wisened and intelligent creature is to be the best, most pure and divine, wise, awakened and enlightened, adroit, clever and sagacious like the swan, and pick all the goodness and forsake all that is bad in this world. Saraswati rides on a swan, symbolising the creature’s inborn enlightenment and excellence of his mental caliber. Symbolically, Saraswati resides in his Pran because it rides on the swan, i.e., in his heart, throat and mind —that is, his heart has purity of emotions, he speaks good of all, and his words are sought after by all as priceless gems of wisdom, and his mind is intelligent, discerning and noble.

The alphabet ‘Ha’ is sounded by the vibration of the exhaled wind passing through the vocal cords present in the throat or the wind pipe which connects to the nose, while the alphabet ‘Sa’ is sounded by the root of the tongue which opens into the mouth when the breath is inhaled. Both the nose and the mouth open in the same cavity called the throat. Hence, the inter relationship between ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ is evident. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is like the divine swan, but he was unaware of his divinity and sublimity, his exalted stature, till that was pointed out to him in this verse. So he must become one like a ‘swan’, remind himself constantly that he is like

a swan, and he must do not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan.]

षट्शतानि दिवारात्रौ सहस्राण्येकविंशतिः ।
एतत्सङ्ख्यान्वितं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा ॥ ३२॥

ṣaṭśatāni divārātrau sahasrāṇyēkaviṁśatiḥ ।
ētatsaṅkhyānvitam mantram jīvō japati sarvadā ॥ 32॥

“Verse no. 32 = The result is that a creature (here the Yogi) continuously repeats this Mantra ‘Hans’ 21 thousand times in a single day, including day and night¹.

[Note—¹During the 24 hour period covering a single day and night, a person inhales and exhales, or breathes, roughly 21 thousand times because each cycle of inhalation and exhalation is equivalent to saying one Mantra ‘Hans’ consisting of the two syllables ‘Ha and Sa’.]

अजपानाम गायत्री योगिनां मोक्षदा सदा ।
अस्याः सङ्कल्पमात्रेण सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३३॥

ajapānāma gāyatrī yōginām mōkṣadā sadā ।
asyāḥ saṅkalpamātrēṇa sarvapāpaiḥ pramucyatē ॥ 33॥

“Verse no. 33 = For Yogis, this is the ‘Ajapa Gayatri’¹ which can provide them with Mukti (liberation and deliverance from this world, emancipation and salvation for their souls). By merely invoking it, one can overcome or get rid of all sins and their evil effects.

[Note—¹The word Ajapa means ‘non-Japa’ or a silent, effortless, imperceptible, involuntary, inaudible and quiet repetition of some holy words. The holy words are the Mantras which have divine and sublime powers. The Mantra referred to here is the great ‘Gayatri Mantra’ which is ‘OM BHURBHUVAH SVAH TATSAVITURVARNYAM BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAHİ DHIYO YO NAH PRACHODYAT’, meaning ‘OM is the supreme, transcendental Brahma. He is the lord of creation of the terrestrial, the celestial and heavenly worlds. That Brahma is luminous like the sun. He is excellent, the best, the most exalted, a destroyer of sins, and a divine entity. May he imbibe, infuse and inspire our intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that we are purified and move on the righteous and noble path’. The 4 phrases of the Gayatri Chanda are clearly marked by small numerals in this Mantra. This Mantra appears in the Rig Veda (3/62/10), the Sam Veda (1462), and Yajur Veda (3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/6). Please also refer to chapter 2, Chandogya-panishad, canto 3, section 12, verse no. 1 in this context.

‘Ajapa’ is, scientifically speaking, related to electrophysiology. Silent chanting or incantation of some words in special configurations, having special

powers, generates an electric current and a small voltage in the tissues and cells of the body. The tissues producing electric current produce vibrations which have certain frequencies. These frequencies are different in audible Japa, but the basic operating fundamentals are the same.]

अनया सदृशी विद्या अनया सदृशो जपः ।
अनया सदृशं ज्ञानं न भूतं न भविष्यति ॥ ३४॥

anayā sadṛśī vidyā anayā sadṛśō japaḥ ।
anayā sadṛśam jñānam na bhūtam na bhaviṣyati ॥ 34॥

“Verse no. 34 = There has not been in the past and shall not be in the future any ‘Vidya’ (knowledge, learning, expertise, skill, philosophy and science), any ‘Japa’ (repetition of holy words) and any ‘Gyan’ (gnosis; wisdom, enlightenment, awareness, consciousness and erudition) which was, which is, and which shall be akin to or equivalent to this aforementioned ‘Ajapa Gayatri’ —i.e., the silent, effortless, unspoken, imperceptible and regular repetition of the Gayatri Mantra (as described in verse no. 33).

कुण्डलिन्या समुद्भूता गायत्री प्राणधारिणी ।
प्राणविद्या महाविद्या यस्तां वेत्ति स वेदवित् ॥ ३५॥

kuṇḍalinyā samudbhūtā gāyatrī prāṇadhārīṇī
prāṇavidyā mahāvidyā yastāṁ vētti sa vēdavit ॥ 35॥

“Verse no. 35 = The knowledge of this ‘Gayatri Mantra’ is the skill or instrument that empowers the aspirant Yogi to bear the vital forces of life called ‘Pran’. It is therefore called ‘Pran Vidya’ (the knowledge which entitles and enables a Yogi to get the requisite strength to bear the vital winds and put them to their proper use). Since ‘life’ is vital for existence, it is also called ‘Maha Vidya’ (or the great and superior knowledge pertaining to life and existence). It has its origin in the ‘Kundalini’¹. A person who realises or understands this is called wise and skilled, expert and adroit in the knowledge of the Vedas.

[Note—¹The *Kundalini* is a coil-like center of subtle energy lying at the base of the spine. It is generally lying in a dormant state. By doing Yogic practices, the stupendous energy trapped in its coils can be released by the unplugging of its mouth which opens into the ‘Sushumna’ nerve. This energy then rises up the spinal cord and ultimately reaches the top of the head. The Yogi who practices this Kundalini activation, called ‘Kundalini Jagran’, experiences brilliance and dazzle unmatched by any other experience.]

जाग्रन्नेतृद्वयोर्मध्ये हंस एव प्रकाशते ।
सकारः खेचरी प्रोक्तस्त्वपदं चेति निश्चितम् ॥ ८२॥

jāgrannētradvayōrmadhyē haṁsa ēva prakāśatē ।
sakāraḥ khēcarī prōktastvampadam cēti niścitam ॥ 82॥

“Verse 82--The ‘Hansa’ (literally a divine swan) resides gloriously and majestically in the center of the two eyes of a creature during the waking state of consciousness. The letter ‘Sa’ of the Hindi/Sanskrit alphabet represents the ‘Khechari Mudra’ of the Yogi which is certainly the personification or the image of the word ‘Twam’.

हकारः परमेशः स्यात्तत्पदं चेति निश्चितम् ।
सकारो ध्यायते जन्तुर्हकारो हि भवेद्धृवम् ॥ ८३॥

hakāraḥ paramēśaḥ syāttatpadam cēti niścitam ।
sakārō dhyāyatē janturhakārō hi bhavēddhṛvam ॥ 83॥

“Verse 83--The letter ‘Ha’ represents the supreme Lord of creation, called ‘Parmeshwar’ which is certainly symbolised or represented by the word ‘Tat’. [That is, the two syllables of the word ‘Hansa’, meaning the divine swan, are ‘Han’ and ‘Sa’ which stand for the two words of metaphysics which have profound impact—the 2nd word is ‘Twam’ and the 1st is ‘Tat’ corresponding to these two syllables respectively.]¹ Any person who concentrates his mind and attention, and contemplates and meditates upon the letter ‘Sa’ shall surely become akin to, or equivalent to the form or the image represented by the letter ‘Ha’. This is called contemplating upon and practicing of the twin tenets of ‘So-a-ham’ and ‘Tattwa-masi’.

[Note—¹The Upanishadic sage establishes uniformity and oneness with the two great philosophies and metaphysical concepts of the scriptures—‘So-a-ham’ which means ‘that is me’, and ‘Tattwa-masi’ which means ‘the essence is pure consciousness and it is me’. The word ‘that’ refers to Brahm which is the universal and absolute Truth and Reality about the existence, and has the qualities, inter alia, of enlightenment, of being eternal, omnipotent, universal, omnipresent, immanent, omniscient etc. When the seeker/aspirant focuses his attention on the self represented by the letter ‘Sa’ (self) and the ‘Khechari Mudra’ (when he is unconscious of the external world and focuses his attention on the glorious supreme entity present in the center of his eyebrows), he realises the truth of the maxim ‘So-a-ham’. When he opens his eyes of wisdom, the truth of the 2nd tenet ‘Tattwa-masi’ dawns on him. Put simply, it means that the creature realises that ‘he is the same as the supreme Brahm who resides in his Atma/soul present in his bosom/heart’. At the same time, ‘the external world seen through this eye of wisdom symbolised by the presence of the divine swan in his eyes is the

same Brahm who has revealed himself in this multifarious, diverse and myriad world'. This is the essential truth, or 'Tattwa'.]"

षड्विंशदङ्गुलिर्हंसः प्रयाणं कुरुते बहिः ।
वामदक्षिणमार्गेण प्राणायामो विधीयते ॥ ९३॥

ṣaḍviṁśadaṅgulirhaṁsaḥ prayāṇaṁ kurutē bahiḥ ।
vāmadakṣiṇamārgēṇa prāṇāyāmō vidhīyatē ॥ 93॥

“Verse no. 93 = The ‘Pran’ (the life factor) is like a ‘Hansa’ (a divine swan) which comes out for a distance of 26 finger-widths from the nostrils astride the exhaled breath. Therefore, ‘Pranayam’ should be done through the two nostrils, the left as well as the right. [To wit, just like the Swan floats calmly on the water of a placid lake and does not venture out for long distances from its quiet abode, the Pran too remains in close proximity of the ascetic by not venturing out into the polluted air outside beyond a certain distance.]

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Chapter 4

The Upanishads of the Atharva Veda

In this Chapter we shall study the following Upanishads of the Atharva Veda with relation to the concept of Hansa in the following six sections:

Section 4.1: Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4.

Section 4.2: Pashupat Brahm Upanishad,

Sub-section 4.2.1: Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 12-21, 23-26.

Sub-section 4.2.2: Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3.

Section 4.3: Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 6.

Section 4.4: Hayagriva Upanishad, verse nos. 10-11.

Section 4.5: Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse no. 3.

Section 4.1

The Atharva Veda, Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4:

The Atharva Veda's Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4 refers to 'Hansa' in the context of the Pran (life giving vital wind forces) moving in and out of the creature's body while making the sound equivalent of the letters 'Ha' and 'Sa' of the Sanskrit language. It concludes by saying that an ascetic who discards false pride related to his gross physical body, and realizes the truth of the spiritual and metaphysical principle that the Atma, the pure consciousness that resides in this body, is his 'true self and identity', and hence remains focused on the 'self' that is manifested in the form of the Pran making the subtle sound of Ha and Sa as it moves in and out of the gross body in the form of breath, is deemed to be enlightened, wise and self-realised; he is a true renunciate and ascetic.

जीवदवस्थां प्रथमं जाग्रद्वितीयं स्वप्नं तृतीयं सुषुप्तं चतुर्थं तुरीयं चतुर्भिर्विरहितं तुरीयातीतम् ।
 विश्वतैजसप्राज्ञतटस्थभेदैरेक एव एको देवः साक्षी निर्गुणश्च तद्ब्रह्माहमिति व्याहरेत् ।
 नो वेज्जाग्रदवस्थायां जाग्रदादिवतस्रोऽवस्थाः स्वप्ने स्वप्नादिवतस्रोऽवस्थाः सुषुप्ते
 सुषुप्त्यादिवतस्रोऽवस्थाः तुरीये तुरीयादिवतस्रोऽवस्थाः नत्वेवं तुरीयातीतस्य निर्गुणस्य ।
 स्थूलसूक्ष्मकारणरूपैर्विश्वतैजसप्राज्ञेश्वरैः सर्वावस्थासु साक्षी त्वेक एवावतिष्ठते ।
 उत तटस्थो द्रष्टा तटस्थो न द्रष्टा द्रष्टृत्वान्न द्रष्टृत्वं कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वं अहङ्कारादिभिः स्पृष्टो
 जीवः जीवेतरो न स्पृष्टः ।
 जीवोऽपि न स्पृष्ट इति चेन्न । जीवाभिमानेन क्षेत्राभिमानः ।
 शरीराभिमानेन जीवत्वम् । जीवत्वं घटाकाशमहाकाशवद्व्यवधानेऽस्ति ।

व्यवधानवशादेव हंसः सोऽहमिति मन्त्रेणोच्छ्वासनिःश्वासव्यपदेशेनानुसन्धानं करोति ।
एवं विज्ञाय शरीराभिमानं त्यजेन्न शरीराभिमानी भवति । स एव ब्रह्मेत्युच्यते ।

jīvadavasthām prathamam jāgraddvitīyam svapnam tṛtīyam suṣuptam
caturtham turīyam caturbhirvirahitam turīyātītam ।

viśvataijasaprājñataṣasthabhēdairēka ēva ēkō dēvaḥ sākṣī nirguṇaśca
tadbrahmāhamiti vyāharēt ।

nō cēj jāgradavasthāyām jāgradādicatasrō'vasthāḥ svapnē
svapnādicatasrō'vasthāḥ suṣuptē suṣuptyādicatasrō'vasthāḥ turīyē
turīyādicatasrō'vasthāḥ natvēvaṁ turīyātītasya nirguṇasya ।

sthūlasūkṣmakāraṇarūpairviśvataijasaprājñēśvaraiḥ sarvāvasthāsu sākṣī
tvēka ēvāvatiṣṭhatē । uta taṣasthō draṣṭā taṣasthō na draṣṭā draṣṭṛtvāna
draṣṭaiva kartṛtvabhōktṛtva ahaṁkārādibhiḥ sprṣṭō jīvaḥ jīvētarō na
sprṣṭaḥ । jīvō'pi na sprṣṭa iti cēna । jīvābhimānēna kṣētrābhimānaḥ ।
śarīrābhimānēna jīvatvam ।

jīvatvam ghaṭākāśamahākāśavadvyavadhānē'sti ।

vyavadhānavaśādēva haṁsaḥ sō'hamiti

mantrēṇōcchvāsaniḥśvāsavyapadēśēnānusandhānam karōti ।

ēvaṁ vijñāya śarīrābhimānam tyajēna śarīrābhimānī bhavati ।

sa ēva brahmētyucyatē ।

“Verse no. 4 = The same breath moves out and in the body as exhalation and inhalation. While doing so, it makes two distinct sounds—‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ respectively. That is, while moving out the sound is equivalent to the letter ‘Ha’ of the Sanskrit language, and when moving in the sound is equivalent to the letter ‘Sa’. This forms the Mantra ‘Hansa’, meaning a divine Swan. In other words, the Jiva’s Pran or vital winds also display artificial distinction as being exhaled breath and inhaled breath though the air is the same entity that cannot be distinguished and mutated. A wise, self-realised and enlightened ascetic understands the esoteric message encrypted in this sound of Hansa.

He realises that the breath, while quietly and imperceptibly making the sound of Ha and Sa, is telling him that he is like the divine bird Swan which is regarded as the purest and the wisest amongst the birds. So, a wise ascetic always concentrates upon his pure and enlightened form known as the Atma that has no physical body like this wind or air element which too has no physical body. The Atma then becomes equivalent to the Parmatma.

With this sublime and eclectic spiritual view firmly established in his inner self, the enlightened ascetic discards all sense of ego and pride vis-à-vis the body. And when this happens, he becomes one with the Parmatma.”

Section 4.2

The Atharva Veda, Pashupat Brahm Upanishad

Sub-section 4.2.1: Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 12-21, 23-26:

Atharva Veda's Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 12-21, 23-26, and Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2 describe the mystical concept of Hansa in the following way—

मानसं हंसः सोऽहं हंस इति । तन्मययज्ञो नादानुसंधानम् । तन्मयविकारो जीवः । 12 ।

mānasaṁ haṁsaḥ sō'haṁ haṁsa iti ।

tanmayayajñō nādānusaṁdhānam । tanmayavikārō jīvaḥ । 12 ।

“Canto 1, verse no. 12 = The ‘Manas Brahm’ has a subtle, a divine and a sublime form or aspect or facet known as ‘Hansa¹’, ‘So-a-Ham²’, etc.

[This Manas Brahm obviously is the pure conscious Atma as the divine bird Hansa, the Swan, is frequently used in the Upanishads as a metaphor for the Atma to indicate the latter's immaculacy, holiness, purity and divinity, along with a high degree of wisdom, enlightenment and erudition. Since the Atma is also the ‘self’ of the creature, a person who performs a fire sacrifice with a holistic approach is expected to become highly self-realised and spiritually awakened or enlightened so much so that when he declares ‘I am that Brahm’ (So-a-Ham), he actually means it and is not being pretentious or deceitful. He is deemed to have understood the esoteric meaning of the term ‘Brahm’ vis-à-vis his own truthful ‘self’ known as the Atma.]

This symbolic fire sacrifice (that is done to attain this eclectic state of existence when the aspirant becomes enough self-realised to understand that he is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified in the form of his Atma known as Hansa) is actually done by practicing meditation upon Naad.

What is it? When the seeker of Brahm becomes completely submerged in the thoughts of Brahm and the Atma, when he continuously meditates upon the pure consciousness by employing the Mantra ‘Hansa’ (as described in a number of Upanishads for this purpose), his inner-self begins to resonate with the sound of Naad³ (i.e. the cosmic sound which is said to be generated by the vibrations in the ether created by the resonance of the cosmic Consciousness). This sound flows in a continuous stream like the flow of oil on a clean surface. Its vibrations reverberate in the nerves and veins of the practitioner's body so much so that he becomes oblivious of everything else in this world.

Any disruption in this state of transcendental existence of continuous bliss and stability is the state of existence known as the Jiva—i.e. the Atma that lacks steadiness of bliss and tranquility, and is therefore tossed and tumbled around by the changing nature of the gross world around it.

[In other words, the 'Jiva' or the living being is an entity that is different from Brahm by the virtue of its losing its connection with the Atma, the pure consciousness. Otherwise, there is no distinction between the Jiva and Brahm.] (12).

[Note—¹The eclectic Mantra *Hansa*—refer verse no. 4 of this Kanda/Canto 1 and its

note. The metaphysical importance and relevance of a Swan vis-à-vis the Atma have been explained as note of verse no. 20 of the present Kanda/Canto 1 of this Upanishad.

²The Mantra *So-a-Ham*—This Mantra has been described in a number of Upanishads—viz. (i) Sam Veda = Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 83. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 34, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-133; Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 28; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 17, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11-2, Canto 5, verse nos. 69-72. (iii) Atharva Veda = Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15.

³*Naad* is the cosmic sound that is said to be generated in the cosmic ether due to the vibrations caused by pulsations of Consciousness. It is the subtlest form of sound and stands for the subtlest form of dynamism of this cosmic Consciousness that the Upanishads prefer to call Brahm. In this manifestation of Naad, Brahm is called Pranav. The cosmic sound of Naad is encrypted in the form of the monosyllabic Mantra known as OM. Therefore it follows that OM is a word manifestation or representative of the cosmic Naad which stands for the cosmic form of life-generating energy and dynamism called Consciousness. The divine entity that possesses this virtue is the Supreme Being known as Brahm.

Now, Hansa is a bird—i.e. it is a living being with a gross body which harbours the same Consciousness inside it in the form of the Atma. This Atma possesses all the eclectic virtues that Brahm possesses. Therefore, for all practical purposes, both the 'Hansa' and 'OM' refer to the same cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm, albeit at two different levels of creation. While the term 'OM' refers to the existence of the Consciousness at the cosmic level in the form of Pranav or Brahm, the term 'Hansa' refer to the same Consciousness that resides inside the gross body of the individual creature as his Atma.

This word OM is an ethereal sound that is used during Yoga or meditation exercises to contemplate upon Brahm because its repetition results in submerging the practitioner in a continuous and overwhelming stream of sound waves, of increasing frequency and pitch, that are generated by the vibrations caused by continuous repetition of OM. The sound reverberates throughout his inner being so much so that it reaches a crescendo. It is then that the practitioner is said to hear the cosmic Naad, the cosmic background sound in the ether which is believed to be generated by the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. It is much like the case of one listening to a favourite radio station only when he catches the particular frequency.]

परमात्मस्वरूपो हंसः । अन्तर्बहिश्चरति हंसः ।
अन्तर्गतोऽनकाशान्तर्गतसुपर्णस्वरूपो हंसः । 13 ।

paramātmāsvarūpō haṁsaḥ | antarbahiścarati haṁsaḥ |
antargatō'nakāśāntargatasuparṇasvarūpō haṁsaḥ | 13 |

“Canto 1, verse no. 13 = This Hansa (Atma) is an image or personification of Parmatma, the supreme Atma which is the cosmic Consciousness. Hansa moves or prevails both in the outside world as well as in the inner-self of the creature (i.e. the microcosmic aspect of creation). In the inner-self, this Parmatma lives in the form of the ‘Suparna’ (a divine bird that is auspicious and with golden wings).

[Here, the Suparna refers to the Hansa, the divine Swan from the perspective of the Upanishads. From the perspective of the Purans, the word ‘Suparna’ though refers to the bird Garuda which is the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. But since Vishnu is also known as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, all-pervading, invisible gross body of Brahm.

Therefore, the verse, simply put, means that the Parmatma, the supreme transcendental Atma, lives in the inner-self of a living being as his individual Atma. This Atma is wise and enlightened. It is likened to the bird Swan because this bird is regarded as a metaphor for these grand virtues. Again, just like the Swan that floats majestically and with dignity on the surface of the water of a lake, remaining unaffected by the impurities present in the water, the Atma too lives in a body with the same attitude and dignity. A wise man understands that he bears the cosmic Consciousness in his inner-self as the Atma which is as immaculate and dignified as the Swan floating on the surface of a lake.

There is another reason why the metaphor of the Swan is used for a wise man who is lost in deep meditation on the ‘self’ and the ‘truth’. The neck of the Swan is curved inwards like the alphabet U with its beak lying almost parallel to its abdomen as it floats calmly on the surface of the water. For a casual observer this posture reminds him of a person who is lost in some deep thoughts. Hence, when ancient sages and seers were searching for an instance to illustrate the state of existence of a man lost in deep meditation and contemplation they hit upon the metaphor of the Swan as being the most appropriate one.] (13).

षण्णवतितत्त्वतन्तुवद्व्यक्तं चित्सूत्रत्रयचिन्मयलक्षणं नवतत्त्वत्रिरावृतं
ब्रह्मविष्णुमहेश्वरात्मकमग्नित्रयकलोपेतं चिद्वन्धिबन्धनम् अद्वैतग्रन्थिः । 14 ।
यज्ञसाधारणाङ्गं बहिरन्तर्ज्वलनं यज्ञाङ्गलक्षणब्रह्मस्वरूपो हंसः । 15 ।

ṣaṇṇavatitattvatantuvadvyaktaṁ citsūtratrayacinmayalakṣaṇaṁ
navatattvatrirāvṛtaṁ rahmaviṣṇumahēśvarātmakamagnitrayakalōpētaṁ
cidgranthibandhanam advaitagranthiḥ | 14 |
yajñasādhāraṇāṅgaṁ bahirantarjvalanaṁ
yajñāṅgalakṣaṇabrahmasvarūpō haṁsaḥ | 15 |

“Canto 1, verse nos. 14-15 = [This verse describes the symbolic form of the Hansa, the enlightened Atma, in its subtle form. In other words, a wise and enlightened creature who has become self-realised understands that Brahm has a subtle body as

represented by the entities enumerated in this verse, and not a gross form as represented by the world and the way the different Gods have been depicted to exist in this creation by the Purans. This fact is also endorsed in verse no. 10 which expressly states that none of the Gods are truly holy and divine and complete in the correct sense! This is because all of them have one or the other of the three Gunas as the dominant factor, whereas Brahm is truly holy, divine and immaculate because he has all of them in equal proportions, thereby one neutralizes the other. In other words, the Gods are not neutral; they are not perfect. On the other hand, Brahm is not only neutral but also perfect. These Gods represent one or more than one divine aspects of Brahm, but not Brahm in its entirety.

Anything that is extremely subtle and sublime cannot be visibly seen as opposed to one that is gross, but subtle and sublime entities have a wider reach, are infinite, and are inherently free from either worldly taints or limitations that come with being gross. That is why Brahm par-se is invisible while the same Brahm's various manifestations in the form of different Gods are visible to a devotee as endorsed in the Purans.

Now, Brahm also lives as the Atma of the individual Jiva (living being; the creature) and as the Gunas that this Jiva possesses. The obvious difference between the Gods and the Jiva lies in the degree of subtlety that their Atma displays. So whereas the Atma that lives inside the Jiva is surrounded by the grossness associated with the physical body, the Atma of the Gods is of a highly subtle nature. A Jiva can become God-like if he sheds his grossness and worldly tendencies. This is the aim of all spiritual practices. However, if the spiritual aspirant has even a trace of desires left in him, though this desire may be of a noble and righteous nature, he would not get complete Mukti, and instead become God-like. The Atma that has assumed a subtle body of a God becomes omnipresent and very powerful as compared to the Atma that lives in a gross body of a Jiva. While the Atma as the 'self' of a God has no shape and attribute, that which is the 'self' of the Jiva has a definite shape and attributes.]

The 'Hansa' (Brahm; the cosmic Consciousness; the Atma) is revealed in this creation at a subtle and microcosmic plane in the form of the following—(i) as the ninety-six Tattwas (principal elements)¹ of creation, (ii) as the eclectic virtues (and the sublime entity represented by them or which is a personification of these virtues) that are compositely known as 'Chinmaya' (enlightenment, wisdom, consciousness, and bliss), (iii) as the three Gunas (inherent qualities in creation, such as Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna), (iv) as the nine Tattwas², (v) as the three Trinity Gods such as Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder of creation who are manifestations of the three aspects of the dynamic energy (the 'fire power' that drives the dynamo of creation) of this Hansa (Brahm), (vi) as being either tied by the various Granthis³ (spiritual knots or stumbling block or mill-stones that act as obstacles in one's spiritual progress) on the one hand, and being free from their shackling effects by acknowledging the presence of the Advaitya Granthi (the presence of the non-dual Brahm in the form of the subtle Atma) on the other hand, and (vii) as being the wearer of the sacred thread (which means that the Jiva is diligent in both the performance of the fire sacrifices⁴ as well as pursuing the sacred knowledge of Brahm by following the various Sutras ('threads'; the various spiritual formulas) as prescribed in the Upanishads and other scriptures (14-15).

[Note—¹The ninety-six Tattwas—refer Krishna Yajur Veda's Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 2-14.

Reference: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda = Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 2-14. (ii) Atharva Veda = Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 5.

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda describes the 96 Tattvas elaborately in Canto 1, verse nos. 2-14.

²The nine Tattwas—The three fundamental Gunas, i.e. the Sata, the Raja and the Tama, the three basic characters of the Atma known as Sat-Chit-Anand, i.e. Sat (truth), Chitta (consciousness) and Anand (bliss), and the three forms of divinity represented by the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder of creation, represent the nine Tattwas of creation.

³Granthi—The word *Granthi* literally means node, a nodule or module or knot or a wart-like or a gland-like structure. It has various connotations depending upon the context in which the word is used. For instance, it might symbolically mean the different gates in a strong fort which must be overcome or broken before one enters the fort or overruns it as done during war times.

The numerous emotional, sentimental and spiritual hurdles that an aspirant faces are also referred to as the Granthi because they are like the hard shell of the nut which is difficult to crack. Only when this shell is cracked can one find the nut. Similarly, only when one overcomes the numerous obstacles and hurdles faced by him in his spiritual pursuit that it is possible for him to have access to the fount of eternal bliss and peace that comes with Brahm realisation which is being aware of the Absolute Truth of existence.

According to the metaphysical interpretation of the term Granthi, it is the various knots present in the heart that shackle the Atma and prevent its liberation and deliverance. These Granthis are called Hridaya Granthis because they stand in the way of a man obtaining freedom from his fetters and keep him tied to this world. Once he is able to rupture them, he finds liberation even while he is still alive in this world. This fact has been clearly emphasized in Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 3, verse no. 15 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. Refer also to Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 8.

From anatomical point of view, the Granthis refer to the ganglions that help to coordinate the different nerves just like major junction boxes in the network of electric wires in a building. The word Granthi also refers to the glands that control all the major functions of the body, including those of the nerves and veins. Just like a knot that helps to tie something, these Granthis of the body bind the subtle energy present inside the body and prevent it from being dissipated or going to waste; it helps to preserve energy and stops it from being released if not wanted. If we treat them as representing the ganglions then it means that by the process of Yoga in which the subtle energy of the Kundalini is released in the spinal cord, or the Sushumna Naadi to be precise, these hitherto clogged and inactive ganglions are reactivated and they begin to function in prime shape. If we consider them as glands then it would mean that the functioning of these glands is restored by the process of Yoga, and this in turn helps the body to work properly.

The Granthi symbolises the center of power and authority because it is the nodal point from where all the authority needed for governance of the body spread out. It is also like the seat of power and authority of a king, much like the strong fortress from where he rules over the kingdom. They represent the nodal points in the body where the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator,

Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva or Rudra the concluder, have their symbolic residence, and it is from here they control the functioning of the body of the individual as well as everything that he thinks and does. If the individual is regarded as the microcosm of the entire creation, then the Atma would be the supreme Brahm, and the various patron deities of the organs would be the different Gods of creation. The Brahm Vidya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 70-71 describes the three main Granthis where these three Gods have their symbolic abodes in the body of the individual creature—viz. Brahm Granthi, Vishnu Granthi, and Rudra Granthi. They have also been described in (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 86-89; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 67-68, 85-86.

⁴The sacred thread is worn by Brahmins when they perform a fire sacrifice. Verse no. 11 above has already established the symbolism of the three types of Brahmin priests who perform the fire sacrifice. Since the sacred thread has three intertwined strands, it means here that all the three priests should work in a coordinated manner in order to derive any benefit from the fire sacrifice. Otherwise it loses its relevance and significance just like a sacred thread that is not woven according to a prescribed manner.

Conversely, it means that the honouring of the Trinity Gods and understanding the fact that they represent the supreme Brahm and his dynamism in the cosmic form is equivalent to wearing the sacred thread in a symbolic manner by the spiritual aspirant.

Taken in simple words this verse means that just as the important aspect of creature or a living being is his Atma for which the term 'Hansa' is used as a metaphor, the understanding of the essential principles of creation, such as the question as to how it was created, how it is regulated and how it would ultimately end, and other such relevant metaphysical questions is equivalent to being acquainted with Brahm because the latter is the supreme Authority that is responsible for every aspect of this creation.

The 'sacred thread' is the eclectic knowledge of Brahm that binds all individual units of creation into one single whole. It is the knowledge that it is Brahm that is the thread which runs through the various units or components of this creation as enumerated in the aforesaid verse, stringing them together to make a structure that is known as this world. This structure has two aspects or facets—one that is visible and gross, and the other that is subtle and underlying.]

उपवीतलक्षणसूत्रब्रह्मगा यज्ञाः । ब्रह्माङ्गलक्षणयुक्तो यज्ञसूत्रम् । तद्ब्रह्मसूत्रम् । यज्ञसूत्रसंबन्धी
ब्रह्मयज्ञः तत्स्वरूपो । 16 ।

upavītalakṣaṇasūtrabrahmagā yajñāḥ ।
brahmāṅgalakṣaṇayuktō yajñasūtram । tadbrahmasūtram ।
yajñasūtrasambandhī brahmayajñāḥ । tatsvarūpō । 16 ।

“Canto 1, verse no. 16 = The sacred thread known as the Yagyopavit is also known as the Brahm-Sutra¹ (referred to in the closing lines of verse no. 15). This is because it

refers to the divine spiritual knowledge that pertains to the supreme transcendental Brahm.

This sacred thread also stands for the different forms of the sacred fire sacrifices; these fire sacrifices can only be done when the person who performs them wears this thread. This is because this thread reminds him that the fire sacrifice is the medium which links him with Brahm.

Again, since the fire sacrifice itself is a personified form of Brahm, it is a natural corollary that the sacred thread also stands for Brahm.

Further, the Sanskrit term for the sacred thread is 'Sutra', literally having two connotations—one obviously means 'a thread', and the other more important meaning is 'a formula, a principle, or a tenet'. Hence, to wear the sacred thread actually means to know the secret tenets of Brahm, to be aware of the principles that pertain to the supreme Truth known as Brahm, to be conversant with the formula which can provide one with access to the pinnacle of spiritual glory and attainment, a knowledge of the Divine that can make one spiritually liberated and emancipated.

The sacred thread that is used (worn) as a symbol of purity during fire sacrifices has a gross form, but its subtler form represents the purity of the fire itself (because there is nothing as powerful as the fire as far as the ability to purify is concerned).

The sacred thread, once again, is used as a symbol of purity and holiness during religious ceremonies because it represents Brahm, the supreme deity worshipped during these ceremonies. It represents the virtues and glories of Brahm, and it is this sublime and subtle aspect of the sacred thread that is the actual one which is of any benefit to the wearer.

It symbolizes the 'Brahm-Sutra'—the esoteric secrets of Brahm, the profound principles of Brahm, the grand tenets of the philosophy of Brahm. It is the link or the bridge between the Jiva who is unaware of Brahm, and the Brahm itself.

The physical form of the sacred thread reminds the wearer constantly that his body is a shrine in which the Supreme Being is consecrated as the Atma, and so he must be very careful of his thoughts, his deeds and his actions so as not to do anything that undermines or defiles the holy nature of this shrine (body).

Therefore, the sacred thread known as the Yagyopavit and the tenets of Brahm known as the Brahm-Sutra are synonyms of each other (16).

[Note—¹The Sacred Thread/Yagyopavit/Brahm Sutra/Tri Sutra—The *Trisutra* are the three threads used in making the sacred thread worn around the neck. These three threads stand for the three Gunas or qualities that Brahm possesses. These are the following--'Sata Guna or quality' is the noble, virtuous, auspicious and good qualities present in a creature. It is marked by such high standards of ethical existence that have, as their characteristic features, such qualities as coolness of head, peace, contentedness, humility, devotion, wisdom, mercy, compassion, creativity, selflessness, service, righteousness, virtuousness, holiness and nobility of thought and action etc. As is evident, these qualities are the best qualities that one can have in him; they have a spiritual dimension to them; they are spiritually uplifting and give a divine halo to those who practice them. (b) 'Raja Guna or quality' covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, desires, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, desire to sustain etc. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic

qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being. (c) ‘Tama Guna or quality’ is the third quality; it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, leading him to such negative traits as sins, vices, perversions, greed, avarice, haughtiness, pride, lust, attachments, yearnings, intoxication, wild behaviour, promiscuity, evils, utter disregard for anything which is righteous, ethical and noble etc.—i.e. in brief, immoral, denigrating and depraved behaviour marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness of misdemeanours. It is the lowest and meanest of the three qualities.

The proportion of the three Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclination of the creatures. For example, a person with a greater proportion of ‘Satvic’ (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of ‘Rajasic’ or ‘Tamasic’ qualities. So we can say that sages, seers, prophets, scholars and generally enlightened persons have a high degree of ‘Satvic’ qualities in them; kings and householders who live a noble life are example of those with higher amount of ‘Rajasic’ quality in them; while sinners, killers, drunks, rowdy elements, cheats etc. are those people with higher ‘Tamasic’ quality in them. Since the creation consists of all types of people, Brahm is deemed to possess all these qualities in him.

The external sacred thread is worn to remind the wearer of his duty and responsibility towards the Brahm who resides in his own bosom. When he has matured enough that he does not need any reminder for this purpose, it is expected of him to then discard the external thread, and instead remain engrossed in the thoughts of Brahm in all planes of existence, whether he is awake or asleep. This is actually what is done when one takes the vows of Sanyas (a life of renunciation) when he is ordained to discard all external symbols such as the sacred thread, the tuft of hair on the head, the water-pot, the ochre clothes, the monk’s staff, etc.

The following Upanishads also deal with the concept of the sacred thread—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 4-15. (ii) Atharva Veda = Par Brahm Upanishad, verse nos. 3-20; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 17, 79, 80-82, 84-85, 88-89. The Mantra dedicated to the Yagyopavit is narrated in Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 37.]

ऽङ्गानि मात्राणि । मनो यज्ञस्य हंसो यज्ञसूत्रम् । पूणवं ब्रह्मसूत्रं ब्रह्मयज्ञमयम् ।
पूणवान्तर्वर्ती हंसो ब्रह्मसूत्रम् । तदेव ब्रह्मयज्ञमयं मोक्षकर्मम् । 17 ।

aṅgāni mātṛāṇi । manō yajñasya haṁsō yajñasūtram ।
praṇavaṁ brahmasūtram brahmayajñamayam । praṇavāntarvartī haṁsō
brahmasūtram । tadēva brahmayajñamayam mōkṣakramam । 17 ।

“Canto 1, verse no. 17 = The various Matras (vowel sounds; the units, letters or syllables of any given Mantra; the length and duration of invocation of various Mantras during contemplation and meditation) are like the units or parts of the

symbolic body of this Brahm Sutra. [Since the term ‘Sutra’ means a formula or principle which can be known or taught only by the medium of words, and words are built around letters and syllables, it is implied here that the Matras are the different metaphysical doctrines and eclectic principles which are an inseparable component of the secrets pertaining to Brahm. They are the ‘Sutra’—the thread—which links the individual creature to the supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm. They are the Sutra—the formula—that help the individual unravel the profound secrets of the divine Brahm. They are the Sutra—the sacred tenets—pertaining to Brahm.]

A wise, intelligent and self-realised spiritual aspirant is called a ‘Hans’ (i.e. he is treated as a wise man who has great wisdom and discriminatory powers to pick up the truth and discard the falsehood) when he remains perpetually submerged in doing meditation and contemplation upon the universal ubiquitous ‘truth’ known as Brahm, or upon his ‘self’ known as the Atma. This Atma is an image of the supreme transcendental Atma known as the Parmatma. The terms Atma, Parmatma and Brahm are synonyms of each other. When he does so, he is actually doing a fire sacrifice in the true sense, though it is done in a symbolic manner. This form of fire sacrifice is done internally as it involves the mind and its sub-conscious faculties which remain focused on the ‘self’ and the truth of creation.

This form of internal fire sacrifice has far greater spiritual value than the one done in the external world. The internal form of the fire sacrifice is subtle and sublime, and consequentially its results are also subtle and sublime in equal proportion. The external form of the fire sacrifice involving elaborate and time consuming rituals is done in a gross world and involves gross forms of physical offerings. Therefore its rewards are also gross and superficial. From the perspective of the long-term spiritual welfare of the Jiva, the internal form of the fire sacrifice has far more value than its external counterpart.

Hence, in this form of the internal fire sacrifice the various Mantras he employs to meditate and contemplate are the symbolic Sutra (the sacred thread) that is worn by a person performing the external forms of the fire sacrifice. [In other words, a wise man who uses the different Mantras to meditate upon the Atma and the supreme Brahm is deemed to be wearing the sacred thread even if he does not physically wear the thread on his body. These Mantras are equivalent to the sacred thread worn during formal forms of the fire sacrifice and are equally purifying and holy. The natural corollary to this observation is that those who meditate upon Brahm, who know the secret of Brahm, who are self-realised in as much as they are well-versed about the esoteric secrets of the Atma—such people need not bother about the necessity of wearing the sacred thread on their physical body. For such enlightened and wise persons, the various Mantras and their Matras are the instruments that he employs to attain the same spiritual glory and divine achievements that others get by doing elaborate fire sacrifices and purifying rituals.]

[Which Mantra does he employ to do the symbolic fire sacrifice? This is answered now—] The Pranav or the Mantra known as ‘OM’ is the symbolic Brahm-Sutra (the secret formula which leads one directly to Brahm-realisation as it is a sound representative of the cosmic Consciousness) that is employed in doing the eclectic form of the fire sacrifice known as Brahm Yagya (which implies an internal form of fire sacrifice consisting of meditation and contemplation upon the pure cosmic Consciousness that resides inside one’s own inner-self as the Atma, the form of the fire sacrifice endorsed in verse no. 12).

The subtle and sublime cosmic Consciousness that inspires the generation of the sound of OM, or which is at the heart of OM and forms its soul, is also known as

Hans. Since OM refers to the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as Brahm, the ‘Hans’ here refers to this ‘conscious’ factor which not only enables the generation of sound in the otherwise lifeless, pacific and inert cosmic ether, but also enables an equally lifeless, inert and gross body of the creature to actually hear sound. [Why does a dead body not hear anything? It is because the ‘Hans’ residing inside it has flown away; the ‘Atma’ or the ‘conscious soul’ has left it.]

Doing a Brahm Yagya in the proper method is a means of obtaining Moksha. [That is, meditating and contemplating upon Brahm with true wisdom and enlightenment, sans any pretensions and deceit, is the only way for attaining spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. It is the only way by which a creature can overcome the torments and tribulations associated with delusions. It is the only way by which he can break free from the cycle of birth and death to find eternal rest and peace. It is the only way by which he can find or discover the real and absolute ‘Truth’.] (17).

ब्रह्मसन्ध्याक्रिया मनोयागः । सन्ध्याक्रिया मनोयागस्य लक्षणम् । 18 ।

brahmasandhyākriyā manōyāgaḥ । sandhyākriyā manōyāgasya lakṣaṇam
I 18 I

“Canto 1, verse no. 18 = Brahm Sandhya (remembering Brahm, offering oblations and prayers to him silently by meditation and contemplation at least three times a day—at dawn, at noon and at dusk) is the way of doing the mental or internal form of the fire sacrifice.

The doing of this Brahm Sandhya is a sign that the person is remembering Brahm internally (i.e. he is meditating and contemplating upon the cosmic Consciousness residing in his inner-self as the Atma; it is a sign that he has become self and Brahm realised). [Refer verse no. 20 also.] (18).

यज्ञसूत्रपूणवब्रह्मयज्ञक्रियायुक्तो ब्राह्मणः । ब्रह्मचर्येण हरन्ति देवाः । हंससूत्रवर्या यज्ञाः ।
हंसपूणवयोरभेदः । 19 ।

yajñasūtrapraṇavabrahmayajñakriyāyuktō brāhmaṇaḥ । brahmacaryēṇa
haranti dēvāḥ । haṁsasūtracaryā yajñāḥ । haṁsapraṇavayōrabhēdaḥ । 19 I

“Canto 1, verse no. 19 = A true Brahmin¹ is one who wears the Yagya Sutra (the sacred thread worn during the performance of fire sacrifices, especially the symbolic one as narrated in verse no. 16), who employs the Pranav Mantra (i.e. the OM Mantra) for his religious needs (such as when doing Japa or repetition of a Mantra done during meditation or while invoking a deity during formal forms of worship, Yoga or meditation, Dhyan or contemplation, etc.), and who is well-versed in the principles of Brahm Yagya (spiritual practices which are equivalent to a formal fire sacrifice but done in a subtle and symbolic manner which lead directly to the

realisation of the supreme cosmic Consciousness and the absolute Truth known as Brahm).

The Gods (the term is a metaphor for the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, holiness, divinity, nobility etc.) are to be found in the diligent observance of the principles that define a man as a Brahmin. [That is, if a man is a true Brahmin as outlined above, he is deemed to be living God in the sense that he would possess all the eclectic virtues that collectively defined as being ‘godly’.]

The Hans (the enlightened Atma, the self-realised and Brahm-realised person) who adheres to the principles of Sutra (i.e. who follows the grand spiritual principles and scriptural tenets that lead to Brahm-realisation, who offers his obeisance to the Supreme Being in the manner outlined in this Upanishad, who leads a life like a true Brahmin as described above, and who understands the secrets of Brahm as well as that of the Atma as a representative of Brahm) is deemed to be doing the Yagya (the fire sacrifice) in the true sense.

There is no difference between the Hans and Pranav. That is, there is no difference between the immaculate Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’ known as the Hans, and the supreme transcendental Brahm known as Pranav. [Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness that produces vibrations of life in the ether that are heard in the form of Naad (refer verse no. 12). These dynamic vibrations in the cosmic ether produce sound that is encapsulated in the monosyllabic word OM. Hence, the OM is a sound form or the cosmic Naad known as Pranav which stands for Brahm because it is the latter which has generated this sound. Only something that has life, energy, vitality and dynamism in it, anything that has consciousness pulsating in it, would be able to generate similar energy and vibrations in another entity when it comes in contact with the former.

For instance, when electricity flows in a wire and another wire is joined to it, the latter also begins to conduct electricity, but if the earlier wire was dead and there was no electric current flowing in it then no matter how hard one tries the second wire will show no electric current in it.

Similarly, the cosmic ether is neutral and calm. It is the presence of the ‘Consciousness’ in it that creates subtle waves of energy which translate into the cosmic sound known as the Naad. If we take the example of the Swan floating in the placid water of the lake, it is the pulsation created by the breathing of the bird that generate subtle ripples in the otherwise absolute calm surface of the water.

If the Atma is personified as a divine Swan known as Hans, the supreme cosmic Atma known as Brahm is personified in the form of Pranav which is name assigned to the cosmic sound known as the Naad. This cosmic sound called Naad is represented by the word OM. [Refer verse no. 17 and 20 of this Canto 1 in this context.] (19).

[Note—¹Who a true Brahmin is has been outlined in other Upanishads as well. References: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition’s Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 14. (ii) Sam Veda tradition’s Vajrasuchika Upanishad, verse no. 9.

The *Gayatri Upanishad* of Atharva Veda (the Gopth Brahman, Kandika 31-38) describes the Gayatri Mantra and the Savitri Mantra, and in its discussion it describes a Brahmin as being a personification of Brahm (Kandika 38). It says that a Brahmin personifies Truth and knowledge of this Truth personified as Brahm (Kandika 35-36), and the Vedas (Kandika 37).]

हंसस्य प्रार्थनास्त्रिकालाः । त्रिकालस्त्रिवर्णाः । त्रेताग्न्यनुसन्धानो यागः ।
त्रेताग्न्यात्माकृतिवर्णोङ्कारहंसानुसन्धानोऽन्तर्यागः । 20 ।

hamsasya prārthanāstrikālāḥ । trikālastrivarṇāḥ । trētāgnyanusandhānō
yāgaḥ । trētāgnyātmākṛtivarṇōṅkārahaṁsānusandhānō'ntaryāgaḥ । 20 ।

“Canto 1, verse no. 20 = The worship of Hansa (Brahm; Pranav; the Supreme Being; the cosmic Consciousness; the pure conscious Atma) is done three times a day, called the ‘Tri-Sandhya’. [This worship is called ‘Tri-Sandhya’ as it is done at three points of time in the day when one phase meets another. These are ‘dawn’ when the night meets the day, ‘noon’ when the morning meets the evening, and ‘dusk’ when the day meets the night. Refer also to verse no. 18.]

The three times symbolize the three Varnas (letters of the divine word OM standing for Brahm or Pranav). [The reference here is to the OM Mantra or the Pranav Mantra which is used to offer worship to the supreme transcendental Brahm three times of the day mentioned above. The word OM has three letters or syllables—‘A’ standing for initiation of creation symbolized by dawn, ‘O’ standing for development and growth of creation symbolized by the noon when the sun is at its best splendour and brilliance, and ‘M’ standing for end or conclusion of creation symbolized by dusk when the day ends and the darkness of night overtakes.]

This worship is accomplished by symbolically invoking the blessings of the three types of the sacred Fire¹.

The Atma, the pure ‘self’ and the cosmic ‘consciousness’, is a personification of these three sacred Fires. The Atma has the same characteristic virtues as that of the fire element. [That is, the Atma has the same magnificence, glory, splendour, radiance, powers, potentials, holiness, divinity and purity as the ‘fire element’. Just like the ‘fire’ gives energy, light, warmth and dynamism to the entire creation, and it is impossible to imagine life and creation without it, it is equally impossible to imagine this creation without the Atma. In the cosmic perspective, this Atma is known as Brahm. Hence, it is Brahm that infuses life and vitality into the otherwise lifeless and inane gross creation.]

While offering obeisance and worship to this Atma, the worshipper employs the ‘OM’ Mantra which also consists of three letters or syllables, and has the same potentials and divine powers as the Atma that represents the fire element because OM stands for Brahm, the Supreme Being and the transcendental cosmic Consciousness.

By corollary therefore, both the Atma and OM refer to the same divine entity (Brahm, the true self) that is symbolized by the bird Hansa (Swan). [Refer verse no. 17.19.]

Meditating and contemplating upon this Hansa is known as the internal form of doing the fire sacrifice (20).

[Note—¹The *three types of fire*:—References: (i) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 2, section 24; Canto 4, sections 11, 13, 14 and 17; Canto 5, sections 4-10, 19-24. (ii) Atharva Veda = Atharva-shikha Upanishad, Kandika 1; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 2. (iii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Kathvalli Upanishad or Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse nos. 7, 13-18; Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 8; Garbha Upanishad, paragraph no. 5; Kath Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3

The three aspects of fire are said to be the following—the terrestrial fire that sustains life on the earth, the fire of the heavens which is used by the Gods, and the fire of the nether worlds or hell which is used to punish sinners.

Worship of the three important fires have been described in Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition in its Canto 2, section 24, while Canto 5, sections 4-10, 19-24 explain their great symbolic metaphysical significance.

The *Garhyapatya* fire—[Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/3-6, 4/11/1-2, 4/17/4.] This is the householder's fire. A householder has land and farm representing 'earth' in which he grows food. This food is grown with the help of the light of the Sun, and it is cooked in the fire of the fire-place in the house. Hence, the *Garhyapatya* fire, or the householder's fire, is intrinsically present and is implied in these 4 entities. It is an integral part of these four. The earth has the 'fire element' because without heat and warmth, no seed would germinate and no life can survive on this earth. The food has fire present inherently in it because it is the energy inherent in food which helps to energise the creature that eats it. The presence of heat in the sun does not need to be explained because it is very evident.

The fire was the central piece of all religious life in early times of the Vedic period when a fire sacrifice was deemed to be the best religious activity that a righteous man can expect to do. In this context, the *Garhyapatya* fire is the main fire lit during such formal fire sacrifices. The fire pit was either square-shaped or rounded. In the context of the fire sacrifice, it was used for the purpose of daily rituals, cooking or warming the offerings, heating of the vessels, to perform circumambulation, to act as a main cauldron or reservoir of the sacred fire which was to be kept perpetually burning throughout the life of the householder once it was lit.

Regarding the *origin* of the *Garhyapatya* fire, the Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 1 says that it was created along with Brahma the creator (the first of the Trinity Gods), the Rig Veda, the Vasus, and the Gaytri Chanda at the beginning of creation by the supreme Creator Brahm, the Supreme Being, and it represents the first leg of Brahm and corresponds to the first letter A of OM.

The *Dakshinagni* fire—[Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/7-10, 4/13/1-2, 4/17/5.] This holy fire is a witness to making of charities when some water is poured as libation to the Gods. It signifies that the Gods are offered water to drink. To give water to the thirsty is the greatest form of charity. Therefore, this fire is symbolically present in water, and when it is poured, it signifies that the heat produced by sins committed by the person has been doused. Charities and donations make a man famous and renowned, hence the allusion to directions of the earth. His glory shines like the bright moon and he is called a star among human beings. He is the most exalted amongst his peers and compatriots even as the moon is most prominent amongst the stars in the sky.

Like in the case of the *Garhyapatya* fire, the fire that was lit in the main sacrificial shed or site just near the main fire pit but to the south of it and where donations and charities were made was called *Dakshinagni* fire. The fire pit for this fire was semi-circular or bow-shaped.

Regarding the *origin* of the *Dakshinagni* fire, the Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 1 says that it was created along with the Antariksha (the space above the earth), Lord Vishnu the sustainer (the second of the Trinity Gods) and Rudra (Brahm's macrocosmic

form as the Viraat Purush), the Trishtup Chanda and the Yajur Veda by the supreme Creator Brahm, the Supreme Being, and it represents the second leg of Brahm and corresponds to the second letter 'U' of OM.

The *Ahawaniya* fire—[Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/11-16, 4/14/1-2, 4/17/6.] The Ahawaniya fire is lit during the fire sacrifices to respectfully invoke Gods, and invite them to come and participate in the sacrifice and accept offerings made to them. The word 'Aavaahan' in Sanskrit means to invite, invoke, to pray respectfully with the intention of welcoming. Since one uses one's mouth for these purposes, the fire in the form of the strength, energy and vigour of the spoken word and the power of speech residing in the mouth is called Ahawaniya fire. This fire was lit to invoke the Gods, and the Gods live in the heaven; hence the reference to the sky, heavens and electric. Since Pran is the best form of the vital winds, the allusion means that the Gods are the most exalted forms that exist in creation. The 'electric' is a metaphor for immense strength, potent and power, which of course the fire possesses. This inherent quality of Electric that it possess most stupendous powers and strength is likened to the presence of Brahm in it even as the great power and strength present in a man is due to the Atma or Pran present in him. Even as a man is useless without the presence of Pran in him, the Electric would lose its importance if there was no Brahm present in it which gives it its punch and strength.

In ancient times it was an established belief and tradition that the way to attain heaven was through the path of the fire sacrifice. The fire sacrifice was in effect a method to harness the spiritual energy inherent in the all pervading fire element which would sufficiently empower the person performing the fire sacrifice to achieve his goal. The sacrificial pit and the heat generated from it reminds one of the modern day nuclear reactors. Even as the strength and energy and powers of the atom can be harnessed for beneficial or ruinous effects through the nuclear reactor, depending upon the temperament and mental setup of the person who masters the science of atomic energy, the fire sacrifice could be similarly used either for auspicious purposes such as attaining eternal peace and tranquility for the tormented soul, or for attaining worldly glory and conquest. Harnessing of nuclear energy requires expertise, knowledge and skills not easy to master and not accessible to all. Building and operating a nuclear facility also is a daunting and elaborate job. Similarly, the ancient fire sacrifices required special skills and expertise, and it was not simply lighting any odd evening village community bonfire to the merriment of all those who sit around it to gossip about the day's events.

Regarding the *origin* of the Ahawaniya fire, the Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 1 says that it was created along with the Duloka (the heavens), the Aditya (the Sun God), Lord Rudra the concluder of creation (the third of the Trinity Gods), the Jagati Chanda and the hymns of the Sam Veda by the supreme Creator Brahm, the Supreme Being, and it represents the third leg of Brahm and corresponds to the third letter 'M' of OM.

From this perspective of doing a fire sacrifice in order to attain spiritual eternity and liberation, the 'units' of the special knowledge that Yam described to Nachiketa in verse no. 15 of Kathvalli Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition probably pertain to the steps to be followed in the construction of the fire pit—such as the type of bricks used, the number of

bricks to be used, the geometrical design of the sacrificial pit, the type of wood to be used in the ceremony, the Mantras to be chanted, and other such finer details which must be diligently and strictly followed if any spiritual benefit is to be derived from the entire exercise. So, the sacrificial fire pit is like an oven in which the fuel of wood is added and the science of Mantras is used to order to generate immense energy that can empower the patron performing the fire sacrifice with stupendous potentials.

On the other hand, from the metaphysical perspective of harnessing the stupendous energy latent in the eternally burning fire element, Yam must have explained to Nachiketa the different forms of ‘fire’ as a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm’s astounding energy, potentials, powers and strength. The visible symbol of the eternal fire is the sun in the sky and the energy inherently present in the body of all living beings. It is a well known fact that no life can ever exist without heat and energy of the fire element. In Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition (Canto 4, Sub-cantos 5 and 7) it has been stated that Brahm is characterized by light and illumination (as opposed to darkness) which are the characteristic virtues of the fire element. The entire Canto 3 is dedicated to the praise of the Sun God as the essence of life, and Sun is the celestial pitcher of fire element which burns eternally inside it.

The ‘fire’ has immense importance in metaphysics and it is a symbol of life and consciousness. Without ‘fire’ everything is deemed to be dead and gone.

The *importance* of the sacred Fire and its metaphysical angle has been explained elaborately by Yam, the god of death, to Nachiketa in Kathvalli Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, Valli 1, verse nos. 13-18.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 2 says that these sacred fires represent the three letters of the Mantra OM. The first fire called the Garhyapatya Agni represents the first letter ‘A’, the second fire called the Dakshinagni represents the second letter ‘U’, and the third fire called the Ahavaniya Agni represents the third letter ‘M’.

The Garbha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its paragraph no. 5 describes the following three types of fires—*Gyanagni*, *Darshanagni* and *Jatharaagni*.

Amongst these three forms of fires, Jathraagni is one that digests anything that is eaten, drunk, licked or sucked. Darshanagni is one which enables one to see things. And Gyanagni is the one which helps to discriminate between what is good deed and what is not. The divine ‘fire’ has three other forms also. Their locations in the body are as follows—the ‘Ahavaniya’ fire resides in the mouth, the ‘Garhyapatya’ fire lives in the abdomen, and the ‘Dakshinagni’ has its abode in the heart.”

According to some texts, the fire element has *three* legendary forms—viz. the ‘Agni’, which is the terrestrial fire on earth represented by the word Bhu, the ‘Jatvedas*’, which is the fire of the sky represented by the word Bhuvaha, and ‘Vaishwanar[#]’, which is the fire of the heavens represented by the word Swaha (Brihaddevtakaa, 1/67). The term appears in the Rig Veda approx. sixty times and is more often than not synonymous with both life as well as the fire element.

*The *Jatveda Fire* is the cosmic all-pervading Fire element that is uniformly and universally present wherever there is sky element or open space. It is represented by the word Bhuvaha.

Jatvedas is the name of the Sun God as well as the Fire God. The Sun is indeed the most evident form of the fire element and possesses all the virtues and qualities of the latter. When two pieces of wooden drills known as *Arani* are rubbed together vigorously, they produce fire though prior to this rubbing no fire was visibly there. This rubbing is symbolic of the Tapa done by Brahm at the beginning of the creation to create the energy needed to initiate the process of creation which is represented by the latent fire element or its personified subtle form as the Fire God who is invisible. The more gross form of this fire element and the visible aspect of the Fire God is the celestial Sun. It has been explained by Yam, the death God, to Nachiketa in Kathvalli or Katho-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 8.

#The same Upanishad, in its Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 7 describes the Vaishwanar Agni.

The Kath Rudra Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 3 prescribes that a man should establish the *three sacred fires* such as the Grihapatya, Dakshinagni and Ahawaniya in his own self at the time of taking the vows of Sanyas and moving out of the house.

The Fire God known as *Agni* refers to the legendary 'fire element', and it finds very prominent place in the scriptures. The Fire God or *Agni* appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda—1/1; 1/12; 4/5; 5/1; 6/7-9; 7/1, 3-6; 12-13; 8/1, 23, 39; 10/1-7; 12/1-122 etc.; in Sam Veda—1-51; 53-55 etc.; in Yajur Veda—1/5; 2/4; 7/24; 18/72 etc.; and in Atharva Veda—6/119; 8/3; 12/3.

Since it was the first born amongst the various Gods, it was called 'Agni' meaning the one who comes first, that which precedes others. It is the inherent 'fire' element present in all the living creatures that distinguish them from non-living creatures. It is all-pervading and omnipresent, and infuses life to all the creatures (Kaushitaki Brahmin, 4/3; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 9, verse no.1). This fire helps in digestion of food (Shatpath Brahman, 148/10/1).

He is the foremost amongst the Gods worshipped on earth (Shatpath Brahman, 6/1/1/11). He is compared to the Sun in the heavens. He has 7 tongues representing the 7 colours of the rays of the Sun or the colours of light (Rig Veda, 1/146/1; 3/6/2). Since he provides nourishment to the Gods by accepting the offerings made to the sacrificial fire at the time of fire sacrifices, he is deemed to be their sustainer and father (Rig Veda, 1/69/1). Other names of the Fire God called Agni or Agne are the following—Vishwavedus, Kavi, Kavikratu, Jaatvedus, Vaishwaanar, Tanunpat, Matrishwa and Naraashansha. It is believed that he was born from the mouth of the Virrat Purush (Rig Veda 10/90/13).

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 38 says that Agni or the Fire God is one of the ten Digpaals or custodians of the ten directions of the celestial globe. He is the patron deity of the south-eastern direction and worshipped in that corner. Verse no. 39 says that his weapon is known as Shakti—i.e. dynamism, energy, vigour, vitality and strength.]

चित्स्वरूपवत्तन्मयं तुरीयस्वरूपम् । अन्तरादित्ये ज्योतिःस्वरूपो हंसः । 21 ।

citsvarūpavattanmayam turīyasvarūpam । antarādityē jyōtiḥsvarūpō
haṁsaḥ । 21 ।

“Canto 1, verse no. 21 = To remain deeply engrossed in the thoughts of the pure consciousness which is the true ‘self’ of the spiritual seeker, and meditating upon it to the exclusion of all other things, is known as the Turiya state of existence. This is therefore the transcendental state of existence of the creature.

If the inner-self is likened to the Sun, the esoteric and mystical entity that lends this Sun its power to give brilliant light, energy and heat to this world, which gives the Sun its glorious dynamism which not only enables it to be self-sustaining and self-illuminated but also enables it to sustain and illuminate the world around it, is known as ‘Hansa’.

[In other words, it is the self-illuminated Atma hidden invisibly inside the dark gross body of the creature that inspires the latter to become active and alive; it is the consciousness living inside the body of the living being as the Atma that also lights up the world for him (i.e. enables him to perceive the world around him). This role of the Atma is similar to the eternal fire burning inside the Sun’s disc that enables the latter to remain self-illuminate and self-sustaining on the one hand, and sustain and illuminate the world around it on the other hand. This Atma which is self-illuminated, and which lends its ‘light’ to the creature—i.e. provides the body of the creature with the all-important factor of existence known as the ‘consciousness’ that translates into ‘life’ of the creature—is known as Hansa.

The Atma is compared to the celestial Sun because the survival of the gross body of a living being depends directly upon the Atma just like the case of the world directly depending upon the Sun for survival. Even as the living world would certainly perish without the Sun, the body, and therefore the very existence of the creature, would perish without the presence of the Atma inside it.] (21).

प्रोवाच पुनः स्वयंभुवं प्रतिजानीते ब्रह्मपुत्रो ऋषिर्वालखिल्यः ।
हंससूत्राणि कतिसंख्यानि कियद्वा प्रमाणम् । 23 ।

prōvāca punaḥ svayambhuvaṁ pratijānītē brahmaputrō ṛṣirvāḥkilyaḥ ।
haṁsasūtrāṇi katisaṁkhyāni kiyaadvā pramaṇam । 23 ।

“Canto 1, verse no. 23 = The Brahm-putra (literally the son of Brahma, here referring to sage Vaalkhilya) once again asked Swayambhu (the self-born creator Brahma)—‘Oh Lord! How many Hansa-Sutras (the different variations of the Hansa Mantra¹ or its different interpretations) are there, what are their forms, and how do one measure their effectiveness, truthfulness and authority? You are all-knowing, so please be kind to enlighten me about it.’ (23).

[Note—¹The importance of the Hansa Mantra has been described in Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2 of this Upanishad herein below.]

हृद्यादित्यमरीचीनां पदं षण्णवतिः ।

चित्सूत्रग्राणयोः स्वर्निर्गता प्रणवधारा षडङ्गुलदशाशीतिः । 24 ।

hṛdyādityamarīcīnāṃ padam ṣaṇṇavatiḥ ।

citsūtraghrāṇayōḥ svarnirgatā praṇavadhārā ṣaḍaṅguladaśāśītiḥ । 24 ।

“Canto 1, verse no. 24 = [Brahma replied--] ‘The symbolic Sun (representing the dynamic consciousness called the Atma of which another name is the ‘Hansa’) that resides inside the subtle heart of the creature has ninety-six gloriously brilliant and splendorous rays emanating from it and radiating out in every direction.

[The Atma is said to live in the subtle sky of the heart. This sky is known as ‘Hridaya Akash’. Just like the celestial Sun, the Atma too shines in this sky, from where it lends its light and vitality to the whole body of the creature which is regarded as a universe in a miniature form just like the Sun lighting up and injecting life in the whole world from its central location in the sky. Again, just like the Sun has rays radiating out from it, the Atma too effuses consciousness in the form of the ninety-six rays. From the perspective of the physical gross body, these represent the main Naadis or nerves and veins in the body that carry life to all the corners of the creature’s body. From the perspective of metaphysical concept of creation they represent the ninety-six Tattvas, the essential elements of creation. This concept has been explained elaborately in an independent book titled the “The Tattvas of Creation” by this humble author and published on-line.]

The Chit-Sutra that goes out from the nose in a continuous stream (i.e. the breath) also measures ninety-six fingers width in length.

[The term ‘Chit-Sutra’ refers to the breath because it is the symbolic Sutra or ‘thread’ that stitches together the dead entity known as the body and the ‘consciousness or life factors’ known as Chit. When the creature stops to breathe, the body dies, or loses its life. This breath is a continuous stream of vital air known as Pran which is a synonym for ‘life and consciousness’.] (24).

वामबाहुर्दक्षिणकट्योरन्तश्चरति हंसः परमात्मा ब्रह्मगुह्यप्रकाशे नान्यत्र विदितः । 25 ।

vāma bahur dākṣiṇakāṭhyōrantaścarati haṁsaḥ paramātmā

brahmaguhyaprakārō nānyatra viditaḥ । 25 ।

“Canto 1, verse no. 25 = The ‘Param Hansa’ (i.e. the supreme Consciousness representing Brahm that resides in the body of the creature as his Atma) has its habitat in the region of the body between the left shoulder and the right side of the hip joint. [This is why the sacred thread representing Brahm is always worn by slinging it diagonally across the chest from the left side of the neck, crossing over the abdomen to the right side of the hip joint.]

But the irony is that this esoteric secret is not known to anyone.

[The location of Brahm in this area of the body is very significant because it is here that all the major internal organs of the body which are responsible for its maintenance are located. The Atma or the pure conscious soul is said to have its seat in the subtle space of the heart. This heart is the ‘supreme organ’ in the body for the practical reason that if the heart stops its function the body would die immediately. While the failure of other organs might not cause immediate death, failure of the heart results in instant death. No other organ of the body, either singly or collectively, would be able to keep the body alive if the heart gives up.

The Atma, being the ‘supreme cause of existence’, has therefore selected the heart, the ‘supreme organ in the body’ as explained above, to be its seat in the creature’s body just like the Emperor who is seated on the best and the highest throne in the empire.

Above and below this area where the heart is located, no other vital organ is present that may affect the survival of the body. Of course one would argue that the mind and intellect located in the head (the brain) is equally an important a seat for Brahm because it has been said elsewhere in the Upanishads that the head is the seat of Brahm who had entered the body through the Brahm Randhra and enthroned himself in the mind to control the creation from there. This fact is stressed in the Aeiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda, Section 1, Canto 3, verse no. 12; and the Paingal Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 11.

But the importance is to understand the fact that the virtues of intelligence, wisdom, enlightenment, erudition and knowledge, as well as the ability to think and discriminate that are characteristic qualities of the mind and the intellect represent the grand attributes of Brahm whose true form is ‘Consciousness’. It is this ‘Consciousness’ that we refer to when we talk of the Atma that resides in the heart. Say, what use are the mind and the intellect for a dead body, a body from which the Atma or ‘life’ has left?] (25).

[Note—Besides this verse, there are other Upanishads which also endorse the view that Brahm *resides in the subtle space of the heart* of the creature—refer (i) Atharva Veda’s Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 1, verse nos. 9-10; Mundak 2, Section 2, verse no. 1, 6; 9; Mundak 3, Section 1, verse no. 7. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 11.]

जानन्ति तेऽमृतफलकाः । सर्वकालं हंसं प्रकाशकम् ।
प्राणवहंसान्तर्ध्यानप्रकृतिं विना न मुक्तिः । 26 ।

jānanti tē'mṛtaphalakāḥ । sarvakālaṁ haṁsaṁ prakāśakam ।
praṇavahaṁsāntardhyānaprakṛtiṁ vinā na muktiḥ । 26 ।

“Canto 1, verse no. 26 = Those who have obtained access to Amrit (the nectar of Truth; the elixir of bliss and spiritualism) are the only ones who are acquainted with the eternally self-illuminated Hansa (in the form of the Atma and Brahm). No one can obtain Mukti (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) without sincerely, honestly and truthfully, with dedication and faith, meditate and contemplate upon this Hansa (26).

Sub-section 4.2.2: Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3:

हंसात्ममालिकावर्णब्रह्मकालप्रचोदिता ।
परमात्मा पुमानिति ब्रह्मसम्पत्तिकारिणी ॥ १॥

haṁsātmmālikāvarṇabrahmakālapracōditā ।
paramātmā pumāniti brahmasampattikāriṇī ॥ 1॥

“Canto 2, verse no. 1 = The Japa (repetition) of the Hansa Mantra is equivalent to doing Japa of Brahm because this word is a letter form (word form) of Brahm. Brahm-realisation is inspired by it.

Brahm is the Parmatma (the supreme Atma, the Supreme Being) and the Purush (the primal Male; the cosmic Viraat Purush which is the invisible macrocosmic all-pervading sublime form of Brahm from whom the entire creation is revealed).

Brahm is fully endowed with grand spiritual virtues and magnificent divine glories that are compositely called ‘Brahm Sampatti’, the assets of Brahm. [Refer also to Kanda 1, verse no. 22.] (1).

[Note—The grand virtues of Brahm have been expounded in nearly all the Upanishads, some of them being the following—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 15-19, Canto 3, verse nos. 17-22; *Kathrudra Upanishad*, verse no. 12, 27-28, 30-31, 42; *Taittiriya Upanishad* Valli 3, Anuvak 10, verse no. 2-5; *Skanda Upanishad*, verse no. 13; *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad*, verse no. 4; *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 16, 20-21, 26, 29; Canto 3, verse no. 2; and Canto 4, verse nos. 31-32; *Yog Kundalini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 35; *Saraswati Upanishad*, verse no. 50-52; *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*.

(b) Atharva Veda’s = *Mundak Upanishad*, Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 6; Mundak 2, section 2, verse no. 7, 9-11; Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 3-5, 7-9; *Atharvashir Upanishad*, Kandika 4 (full); *Naradparivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 8 which is fully dedicated to enumerating the grand virtues of Brahm; Canto 9, verse nos. 3, 19-22; *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 4, Canto 4, paragraph no. 1; *Shandilya Upanishad*, Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 2-5, and Canto 3, section 1, verse nos. 1-8, 11-14; *Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 27-31, 33, 67; Canto 4, verse nos. 35-38, 67; Canto 5, verse nos. 10, 20-21, 66-67, 72, 113; *Atma Upanishad*, verse nos. 1-D and 1-E, verse nos. 2-4, 9, 30-31; *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 11, 13-16; Canto 2, verse nos. 13-16, 26, 28-30, 44; *Tripura Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 6, 8-9, 16-17, 22; *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 7.

(c) Shukla Yajur Veda’s following Upanishads—*Adhyatma Upanishad*, verse nos. 61-64; *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad* Canto 2, Brahman 3 describes this Brahm’s two forms in detail.

(d) Sam Veda's *Chandogya Upanishad*, *Keno Upanishad* and *Avyakta Upanishad*.

The uniformity and non-duality between *Shiva and Brahm* has been emphasized in— (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's *Dakshin Murti* or *Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad*, *Pancha Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 30, *Skanda Upanishad*, verse nos. 9, 13, and *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 32. (ii) Atharva Veda's *Shandilya Upanishad*, Canto 3, section 2, verse nos. 11-15; *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 11, 32.]

अध्यात्मब्रह्मकल्पस्याकृतिः कीदृशी कथा ।
ब्रह्मज्ञानपूभासन्ध्याकालो गच्छति धीमताम् ।
हंसाख्यो देवमात्माख्यमात्मतत्त्वपूजा कथम् ॥ २॥

adhyātmabrahmakalpasyākṛtiḥ kīdṛśī kathā ।
brahmajñānaprabhāsandhyākālō gacchati dhīmatām ।
haṁsākhyō dēvamātmākhyamātmatattvaprajā katham ॥ 2॥

“Canto 2, verse no. 2 = When a man has become truly self-realised and enlightened about the Atma and its eclectic grand virtues and divine glories, he is deemed to have acquired the knowledge of Brahm. Such a wise and enlightened man is equivalent to Brahm; he becomes an image of Brahm; he becomes one like Brahm. What more is to be said in this matter, for there is no doubt in it.

[That is, once a man becomes truly self-realised in as much as he has realised the presence of the Atma, the pure consciousness, in his inner-self as his true identity known as the ‘self’, when he has understood that this Atma is the same consciousness that also resides in the rest of the creation as the all-pervading cosmic Consciousness, and that this Consciousness is known as Brahm—it is then that he realises that ‘he’ is not the physical gross body with its limitations but the eternal and infinite ‘consciousness’ known as the Atma which represents the supreme transcendental Brahm. This means, he realises that his ‘true self’ is Brahm personified; it does not require any further proof to establish that ‘he’ (i.e. the true ‘self’ of the concerned person) is Brahm himself personified and established in this creation in that form.

When this wisdom dawns on the mental and intellectual horizon of a person, he is deemed to have acquired auspicious and noble characteristics and virtues equivalent to those possessed by Brahm by the virtue of his becoming self-realised and understanding the truth of the fact that his Atma, which is Brahm personified, is his ‘true self’.

In other words, a self-realised and enlightened man is none else but Brahm personified.]

Those who are Gyani (wise, enlightened and realised) spend their precious time in talking and discussing about Brahm, in meditating and contemplating upon Brahm, and in worshipping Brahm.

With due practice, when a uniformity, compatibility, harmony and inseparability is established between the Atma and the Hansa, there would be no chance for any external interference arising from the subjects of this mortal mundane world to create any disharmony or friction or dichotomy between the two.

[That is, when the spiritual aspirant is completely submerged and engrossed in meditating upon the Atma using the Mantra ‘Hansa’ as advised in verse no. 1 of the present Kanda no. 2, as well as in verse no. 12-13, 19-20 of Kanda no. 1 previously, all his links with the outside gross world are broken. None of the creatures or material things of the external world are able to disturb him any longer. They are not able to break the link that is established between his own Atma and the supreme Atma known as Brahm through the medium of the ‘thread’ represented by the Mantra ‘Hansa’. The fact that this ‘Hansa’ Mantra is like a ‘thread’ linking the individual soul to Brahm is endorsed in verse nos. 17, 19-20, 26-27 of Kanda no. 1 herein above.] (2).

अन्तःपूणवनादाख्यो हंसः प्रत्ययबोधकः ।
अन्तर्गतप्रमागूढं ज्ञाननालं विराजितम् ॥ ३॥

antaḥpraṇavanādākhyō haṁsaḥ pratyayabōdhakaḥ ।
antargatapramāgūḍhaṁ jñānanālaṁ virājitam ॥ 3॥

“Canto 2, verse no. 3 = When the inner-self resonates with the cosmic sound called Naad (as happens when the ethereal Mantra Pranav or OM is constantly and persistently repeated during the process of Yoga or meditation) so much so that it appears to the practitioner that this Naad is springing forth from his inner-self (like ripples or waves generated in the water of a lake), the Hansa (i.e. the Atma) that is experienced and witnessed then implies that the spiritual aspirant has indeed become self-realised and has attained spiritual enlightenment.

[That is, when the aspirant is drowned in the vibrations created by doing Japa with the Pranav Mantra dedicated to Brahm, i.e. the Mantra OM, a time comes when he is able to experience the presence of the Consciousness inside his inner-self. It appears to the practitioner that these vibrations created by doing Japa or repetition of OM originate from a central point in his heart, and then spread out from it to cover each point of his being just like ripples appearing in the water of a lake having their origin at one point but spreading out to its furthest corner. It is then said that he has become self-realised because he has witnessed the presence of the Atma symbolized by the Hansa inside his own bosom.

It is easy to visualize this phenomenon. Suppose there is a lake whose surface is absolutely calm and placid. Now suppose there is swan floating on this surface. The bird would breathe, and this process creates a small expansion and contraction of the muscles of the body which each inhalation and exhalation. This in turn produces subtle rhythmic pulsations of the body of the swan which passes on to the water, thereby creating subtle waves on the surface of the otherwise absolutely calm water. When one observes these waves he finds that they have their point of origin at the spot where the swan floats.

In the context of metaphysics, the ‘consciousness’ residing in the inner self of the creature as his Atma has its abode in the space of the subtle aspect of the heart. It is from here that vibrations of life are generated, and when they begin to resonate in the inner being of the creature they resemble the cosmic Naad because the creature is an image of the cosmos in a miniature form.

The heart is made to beat by the spark of life known as ‘consciousness’ present in it. The subtle vibrations created by this beating are reinforced by the

vibrations created by doing Japa with OM. The energy waves generated by the beating of the heart and the rhythmic chanting of OM reinforce each other, and the two coalesce with each other to gather momentum and energy that leads to a resonating sound that makes it possible for the man engrossed in meditation to hear a reverberating sound that resembles the sound of the cosmic Naad (sound) inside his being. What is primarily a subtle form of sound becomes an overwhelming resonance that virtually drowns the hearer in its reverberating crescendo.]

When one becomes enlightened internally, it is possible to know about the truth of all things externally.

[When one is inherently intelligent and wise, it is easy for him to learn anything in this world, as opposed to a man who is basically stupid, dull, block-head and ill-witted. No matter what great efforts are made to teach him anything, he would just not understand. The same teacher teaches a class of so many students, but out of them some reach the pinnacle of glory and achievement in life while others become complete failures. How can one blame the teacher, for if his teaching was faulty then how is it that some of his students do so excellently well in life in the field of knowledge taught by the teacher?] (3).”

Section 4.3

The Atharva Veda, Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 6:

Atharva Veda’s Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 6 says that Brahm and the Atma are the same, and that since the term Hansa (a divine Swan) is used for Brahm it means that it also implies the Atma of the individual creature. It also says that the word ‘Hansa’ refers to the breath that comes in and goes out of the body of all those who breathe. To quote—

असावादित्यो ब्रह्मेत्यजपयोपहितं हंसः सोऽहम् ।
 प्राणापानाभ्यां प्रतिलोमानुलोमाभ्यां
 समुपलभ्यैवं सा चिरं लब्ध्वा त्रिवृदात्मनि
 ब्रह्मण्यभिधायमाने सच्चिदानन्दः परमात्माविर्भवति । 6 ।

asāvādityō brahmētyajapayōpahitaṁ haṁsaḥ sō'ham । prāṇāpānābhyāṁ
 pratilōmānulōmābhyāṁ
 samupalabhyaivaṁ sā ciraṁ labdhvā trivṛdātmani
 brahmaṇyabhidhyāyamānē saccidānandaḥ paramātmāvirbhavati । 6 ।

“Verse no. = The supreme transcendental Brahm (the cosmic Consciousness), which is as life-giving, as splendid and as self-illuminated as the celestial sun, resides in the gross body of every living-being who breathes in the form of the latter’s Atma

(soul; the 'self'). This Brahm (that resides in the creature's physical gross body as his Atma) is known as the 'Hansa' (literally a divine Swan).

This 'Hansa' also refers to the breath that comes in and moves out of the creature's body while making a subtle hissing sound while doing so.

['Ha' sound is made when one inhales, and 'Sa' sound is made when one exhales. This is a continuous process. In Yoga Upanishads it is referred to as the silent, steady and continuous involuntary repetition of the 'Hansa Mantra' which pertains to the supreme transcendental Brahm. This is sort of involuntary meditation and contemplation done when a spiritual aspirant has accomplished certain level of enlightenment and spiritual achievement. Such an aspirant is not required to specially sit for Yoga at a fixed time or for certain duration of time, as his entire life is spent in meditation and contemplation. He is meditating upon Brahm and the Atma all the time, even when he is asleep or going about his mundane duties in this world. The reason is that each of his breath is a repetition of the 'Hansa Mantra' related to Brahm; he is always focused on Brahm.]

When the spiritual aspirant becomes enlightened and self-realised he becomes firmly convinced that his true identity is the 'Hansa' that is an acronym for Brahm, the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness that is the Absolute Truth of creation. That is, he becomes convinced that the 'Hansa' is none but his 'true self'; or that 'he is the Hansa (Brahm) personified himself'. ['Hansa So-a-Ham'.]

Meditating upon this Hansa makes him enlightened about the vital winds known as Pran and Apaana (which are the two primary winds in his body, the former moving upwards, and the latter moving downwards in the body). This also enlightens him about the importance of breath and its control.

[This is because only when he concentrates his mind during meditation that he is able to hear the subtle sound of 'Ha' and 'Sa' being made by the vital winds as they come in and go out of the body in the form of breath. This leads him to discover that his Atma, the pure consciousness residing in his gross body as his true 'self', and the Pran, the vital wind that makes the sound of Hansa, are synonymous with each other. One can't exist without the other. If there is no 'consciousness' or life-awareness inside the body, the latter would not breathe, and if the breath is stopped the body would die automatically, thereby snuffing out consciousness from it.]

Hence, by constant and persistent practice of this eclectic Vidya (spiritual knowledge that is obtained by steady meditation and contemplation) for a long time does one become aware of the presence of the supreme transcendental Atma known as the 'Parmatma', the Supreme Being, that is honoured and eulogized by the epithet 'Satchidaanand'—one that is 'Sat' or truthful, one that is 'Chit' or consciousness, and one that is 'Anand' or blissful.

In other words, when the spiritual aspirant becomes self-realised, he also becomes Brahm-realised. This results in his experiencing the presence of the truthful, the conscious and the blissful Atma in his own inner-being. He becomes enlightened, and this enlightenment means he has attained knowledge of the Absolute Truth. That is, he has attained true Gyan (6).

Section 4.4

The Atharva Veda, Hayagriva Upanishad, verse nos. 10-11:

Atharva Veda's Hayagriva Upanishad, verse nos. 10-11 describe the concept of Hansa in the context of Lord Hayagriva, the horse-headed incarnation of Vishnu, as a Mantra that helps to establish oneness between all forms of Brahm. Now, let us quote and see what these verses say in connection with 'Hansa':--

हयग्रीवैकाक्षरेण ब्रह्मविद्यां प्रवक्ष्यामि ।

ब्रह्मा महेश्वराय महेश्वरः संकर्षणाय संकर्षणो नारदाय नारदो व्यासाय व्यासो लोकेभ्यः

प्रायच्छदिति हकारोऽसकारोमकारो त्रयमेकस्वरूपं भवति । ह्रौं(ह्रौं) बीजाक्षरं भवति ।

बीजाक्षरेण ह्रौं(ह्रौं) रूपेण तज्जापकानां सम्पत्सारस्वतौ भवतः । तत्स्वरूपज्ञानां वैदेही

मुक्तिश्च भवति । दिक्पालानां राज्ञां नागानां किन्नराणामधिपतिर्भवति । 10 ।

hayagrīvaikākṣarēṇa brahmavidyāṁ pravakṣyāmi ।

brahmā mahēśvarāya mahēśvaraḥ saṁkarṣaṇāya saṁkarṣaṇo nāradāya

nāradō vyāsāya vyāsō lōkēbhyaḥ prāyacchaditi

hakārōṁsakārōmakārōṁ trayamēkasvarūpaṁ bhavati ।

hlaum(hsaum) bījākṣaraṁ bhavati ।

bījākṣarēṇa hlaum(hsaum) rūpēṇa tajjāpakānāṁ sampatsārasvatau

bhavataḥ । tatsvarūpajñānāṁ vaidēhī muktiśca bhavati ।

dikpālānāṁ rājñāṁ nāgānāṁ kinnarāṇāmādhīpatirbhavati । 10 ।

“Verse no. 10 = Now I (Brahma who is narrating this Upanishad) shall describe to you (Narad) the Brahm Vidya or the knowledge that outlines how the word Hayagriva is one and the same as the word Brahm which refers to the Supreme Being.

The word Hayagriva is based on one letter, viz ‘Ha’. It is the encrypted form of the Brahm-Vidya or the knowledge pertaining to Brahm. It was given (preached or passed on) by Brahma, the creator, to Shiva. Shiva gave it to Sankarshan; Sankarshan to sage Narad; Narad to sage Veda-Vyas; and Vyas narrated it for the rest of the creation. [This is because it was sage Veda-Vyas who had classified the Vedas and extracted their spiritual philosophy in the form of the Upanishads which teach about this Brahm Vidya.]

When the three Sanskrit letters ‘Ha’ (as in *hut*), ‘Sa’ (as in *son*), and ‘Ma’ (as in *mother*) are merged together, we get the Beej Mantra ‘Hasaum’. [There is another alternative to this, and it is the Beej Mantra ‘Halaum’ consisting of ‘Ha’, ‘La’ (as in *luck*) and ‘Ma’.]

By meditating upon the combined form of the two letters ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’, which forms the monosyllabic Mantra ‘Hansa’, one is able to have access to both Laxmi and Saraswati (i.e. one attains material prosperity and well-being as well as knowledge and expertise represented by these two Goddesses respectively).

[It should be noted here that the combined form of the two letters produce the word 'Hansa' which literally means a Swan. But from the metaphysical perspective, Hansa refers to the pure consciousness known as the Atma that resides in the inner-self of all living beings as their truthful 'self' and which is an image of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. There is a chain of Upanishads that emphasis that the word 'Hansa' is a divine form of Mantra that directly relates to Brahm, the Supreme Being.]¹

Those who become self-realised and enlightened by meditating and contemplating upon the twin letters 'Ha' and 'Sa' (i.e. the eclectic Mantra 'Hansa') are indeed the ones who attain Videha Mukti—i.e. they obtain the final liberation and deliverance when they will not have to come back in this world to assume another body as a creature; they emancipation and salvation is final and complete.

They become so exalted that they have sway over the Dikpaals (the custodians of the world), the various Kings, the Naags (the custodians of the nether world) and the Kinnars (the custodians of the treasury of the Gods) (10).

[Note—¹Since the main thrust of the Upanishads is to ignite spiritual awakening and make the seeker see the 'Truth', they always strive to establish the fact that this 'Truth' is always the same and can be easily visualized and understood by the means of a number metaphors and instances, one of them being the 'Hansa' or the divine Swan. The main objective is to establish that Vishnu, Hayagriva, Brahm, Parmatma and Atma, as well as OM, the ethereal sound representing Pranav, are the same universal divine entity known as the super transcendental Consciousness which is the Absolute Truth of creation.

Now let us examine how the concept of these three Sanskrit letters 'Ha', 'Sa' and 'Ma' fits into this picture. The word Hansa has 'Ha' as its first letter, the divine Swan is called a Hansa and it also has 'Ha' as the first component, and the name of Lord Hayagriva, who is regarded as the first divine form of Brahm, the Supreme Being, to make sound, or 'speak', also has this 'Ha' as its first letter. Incidentally, the first cosmic causal body of Brahm is known as Hiranyagarbha which also has the letter 'Ha' as its first component. In the Mantra 'So-a-Ham', the second component 'Ham' refers to the living being, and the letter 'Ha' is its first part. The link is obvious—first came into being the cosmic form of Brahm as Hiranyagarbha, which transformed as Hayagriva. Since the living world came into being as a second step, the 'Ham' part stands for the living being.

Similarly, the second letter 'Sa' is also the second letter of word Hansa, and is the first letter of the Mantra 'So-a-ham'. This is because Brahm, who is also given the name of Hansa because of its purity and knowledge, has revealed itself as the Atma of the creature. The Upanishads have described this Atma as Hansa along with Brahm. So, the second letter 'Sa' establishes a link between Brahm and the Atma of the living being.

Now we finally come to the third letter 'Ma'. This letter is the third letter of OM, the divine Mantra standing for Brahm, and symbolizes the conclusion of creation. It kind of establishes a bridge seamlessly linking the present and the future. OM represents the wide space of the sky where the Atma dissolves upon leaving the confines of the gross body of the creature. 'Ma' is also the last letter of the Mantra 'So-a-Ham' implying that once the wise and enlightened man becomes self-realised and recognizes that his 'self' is the Atma known as Hansa, an epithet and an aphorism used for Brahm, he

effortlessly leaves his grossness that is associated with the physical body to become sublime like these two divine entities, the Atma and Brahm. This achievement or knowledge leads to his Mukti—his liberation and deliverance from the fetters of ignorance and its attendant delusions.]

हयग्रीवैकाक्षरजपशीलाज्ञया सूर्यादयः स्वतः स्वस्वकर्मणि पूर्ववर्तन्ते ।
सर्वेषां बीजानां हयग्रीवैकाक्षरबीजमनुत्तमं मन्त्रराजात्मकं भवति । 11 ।

hayagrīvaikākṣarajapaśīlājñayā sūryādayaḥ svataḥ svasvakarmaṇi
pravartantē । sarvēṣāṃ bījānāṃ hayagrīvaikākṣarabījamanuttamaṃ
mantrarājātmakaṃ bhavati । 11 ।

“Verse no. 11 = Those who do Japa (repetition) with this single-letter Mantra of Lord Hayagriva, i.e. the Mantra ‘Hansa’, become so mystically empowered and authoritative that even the Sun does not violate its duties and rises at the appropriate time out of awe of him, out of respect for him.

[That is, they become as powerful as the Supreme Being himself. The Sun cannot violate the laws of Nature set by the Supreme Being, and since the worshipper of the Supreme Being also becomes as powerful as the Lord himself if he attains self-realisation, because this makes him one like the Lord himself, the Sun rises in promptly and efficiently in the allotted time so that he can offer worship to the Lord.

There is another connotation to this statement. Since the Sun is a personified splendorous form of Brahm, it keeps its words and rises in time to allow the worshipper to offer his oblations to the Lord at the correct time slotted for this purpose.

The third connotation is that he becomes as powerful and holy as the ‘fire element’ because the Sun is regarded as an eternal treasury of this element.]

This single-letter Beej Mantra of Lord Hayagriva is like a king amongst all the Mantras (11).

Section 4.5

The Atharva Veda, Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse no. 3:

Atharva Veda’s Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse no. 3 says that the Tarak Brahm, the aspect of the Supreme Being that is spiritually liberating and delivering for the Atma of the creature, is known as Hansa.

दमिति हंसः । दामिति दीर्घं तद्धीजं नाम बीजस्थम् । दामित्येकाक्षरं भवति ।
तदेतत्तारकं भवति । तदेवोपासितव्यं विज्ञेयं गर्भादितारणम् । 3 ।

damiti haṁsaḥ | dāmiti dīrghaṁ tadbījaṁ nāma bījastham |
 dāmityēkākṣaram bhavati | tadētattārakaṁ bhavati |
 tadēvōpāsitavyaṁ vijñēyaṁ garbhāditāraṇam | 3 |

“Verse no. 3 = When Brahma thus meditated and realised the divine form of Narayan, i.e. when he became Brahm-realised and enlightened about the Truth, he exclaimed—‘Da Hansa’. That is, the Lord who gives (‘Da’ standing for one who gives) is none but ‘Hansa’ (literally a divine Swan but implying the supreme transcendental Brahm who is the Supreme Being for whom this epithet is used). [This phrase ‘Da Hansa’ may also mean ‘the Supreme Being who gives life and consciousness to the world lives in the form of the Jiva, the creature, as his true self known as the Atma or the soul’.]

The Beej Mantra of this ‘Hansa’ qualified as ‘Da’ is ‘Daam’ (i.e. the consonant ‘Da’, as pronounced in *mother*, with the long vowel sound of ‘Aa’ as pronounced in *master*, resulting in the letter ‘Daa’, and its Mantra form is ‘Daa(m) or Daam’ where ‘m’ is silent). Hence, ‘Daa(m)’ is the one-lettered Mantra of the Supreme Being known as Narayan and Hansa.

[That is, the Beej Mantra or the seed monosyllabic divine letter related to the Supreme Being, who ‘gives’ and resides in the individual creature as his ‘Atma’, is ‘Daa’.]

This Beej Mantra ‘Daa(m)’ is the Tarak Mantra¹ of the Supreme Being known as Hansa.

One should meditate upon it. It gives freedom from having to reside in a mother’s womb and undergoing its accompanying horrors again. [That is, it frees the worshipper from having to take a birth again.] [3].

[Note—¹The *Tarak* is that aspect of the Brahm, the Supreme Being, that bestows Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) to the seeker. Therefore, Brahm is called ‘Datta’—‘one who gives’ Mukti. And the Mantra for this aspect of Brahm is ‘Hansa’.

The significance of the letter ‘Da’ or ‘Daa’ lies in the virtue of liberally giving away the things which are very dear to one. This means that a person renounces all his attachments and attractions with those things he gives away to others. It also implies abandoning all desires and yearnings for all things of this material world, abandoning or shedding all desires to gratify the natural urges or please the natural inclinations of the sense organs of the body, to snap all ties with the gross and entrapping world as well as the equally gross and entrapping body. Only a person who has snapped all ties with the world, a person who does not have any obligations and responsibilities to fulfill, a person who is stoic and not a serf of his desires and passions can feel himself free and untied. He is not under any bondage or compulsions to do this or that, or to please this world and keep it in good humour so that the world can provide him with the comfort and pleasures he expects in return for serving the world.

A man is tied in knots only till the time he has anything to expect from the world, and once this expectation is given away or abandoned, he becomes untied or ‘free’.

The realisation of the ultimate spiritual Truth about one's Atma and the Parmatma, the supreme Atma, the understanding of what is the 'truth' and what is the 'falsehood', what is 'freedom' and what is 'entanglement' or 'entrapment', alongside total renunciation and detachment from this mundane and gross world of material sense objects which are perishable and non-eternal is a state of existence that takes a man across the vast ocean of known as the 'world', and gives or provides him freedom from all sorts of shackles. That is, spiritual realisation itself is the 'Tarak' in as far as the spiritual aspirant's needs for finding Mukti (liberation and deliverance) or Moksha (emancipation and salvation) is concerned. One of the primary reasons is that this realisation frees him from the formidable fetter of ignorance and its accompanying darkness of delusions.

Thus, a creature who has given up all attachments with this world and the body, and who has broken up all links with them, is the one who can be said to have crossed this vast ocean-like world in which the body acts as the millstone around the neck of his Atma which is his true self. This achievement is like the 'Tarak' for his Atma because it helps him to break free from their bondage.

So we see we have two connotations of the word 'Tarak'. One pertains to the Supreme Being—who in the case of this Upanishad is Lord Narayan—who bestows Mukti or Moksha to sincere spiritual seekers, and the other is the way of self-realisation which the seeker selects himself to break free from the strong shackle of ignorance and delusions, shackle that keeps him tied in knots to this world and the body. The various Mantras that are prescribed in the various Upanishads are merely tools in the process of realizing the 'Truth-principal'.

In both the cases it is the scriptures that come to his aid by showing him how to benefit from the Lord's benevolence and largesse, and how to go about attaining the exalted stature of self-realisation, how to do it in practical world.]”

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Chapter 5

Goswami Tulsidas' Epic Books

The great saint-poet of India, Goswami Tulsidas has invoked the metaphor of a divine and majestic Swan to symbolize Lord Ram who resides in his own heart as well as in the heart of Lord Shiva.

'Dohawali', verse no. 122 says—'Lord Shri Ram (who is a personified form of the Parmatma, the Supreme Being, and an incarnation of Lord Vishnu), who became a child (son) of Dasrath, the king of Kaushal (Ayodhya), is a protector of the servants (i.e. devotees; dependants; those who serve him) and extremely compassionate, merciful and benevolent towards all. He resides in the Mansarovar-like heart of Tulsidas in the form of a divine Swan who represents all that is auspicious, fortunate, good and positive in this world.'

In Dohawali, verse no. 369 we read that—'Great sages and wise men are like Swans in this world otherwise full of crooks.'

In 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 285, sage Parashuram praises Lord Ram and says that the Lord floats like a majestic Swan in the lake-like heart and mind (Mana) of Mahesh (literally the 'Great Ish', the 'great God'; it is an epithet used to mean Lord Shiva because he is the most enlightened, wise and realised amongst all the Gods).

Section 5.1

Dohawali, verse no. 122:

122. बालक कोसलपाल के सेवकपाल कृपाल ।
तुलसी मन मानस बसत मंगल मंजु मराल ॥

122. bālaka kōsalapāla kē sēvakapāla krpāla.
tulasī mana mānasa basata maṅgala maṅju marāla..

Lord Shri Ram (who is a personified form of the Parmatma, the Supreme Being, and an incarnation of Lord Vishnu), who became a child (son) of Dasrath, the king of Kaushal (Ayodhya), is a protector of the servants (i.e. devotees; dependants; those who serve him) and extremely compassionate, merciful and benevolent towards all. He resides in the Mansarovar-like heart of Tulsidas in the form of a divine Swan who represents all that is auspicious, fortunate, good and positive in this world. (122)

[Note— This Doha appears as no. 4/4/7 of Ram Agya Prashnawali.

The Mansarovar is a lake near Mt. Kailash in the northern Himalayas. It is said to be the legendary abode of Lord Shiva. It is a glacier from where river

Ganges originates, and is said to consist of crystal clear and purest form of water. The Gods descend from the heaven to take a bath in it. The majestic Swan that floats on the surface of this lake are metaphorically regarded as everything holy, divine, auspicious, good and positive in this creation. The Swan is a symbol of purity, cleanliness and immaculacy. It is this reason why it is deemed to be a mount of goddess Saraswati, the patron goddess of knowledge, learning and wisdom, because these virtues make a creature enlightened, and remove his darkness of ignorance.

In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 285, sage Parashuram praises Lord Ram and says that the Lord floats like a majestic Swan in the lake-like heart and mind (Mana) of Mahesh (literally the 'Great Ish', the 'great God'; it is an epithet used to mean Lord Shiva because he is the most enlightened, wise and realised amongst all the Gods).

In the Upanishads, Swan is said to represent the pure consciousness that resides in the heart of a Jiva, the living being. It is employed in the ancient scriptures to denote good virtues of wisdom and purity.

Here Tulsidas means that just like the majestic Swan that floats on the surface of the Mansarovar Lake, Lord Ram, in his form as a divine child who is immaculate, is completely incorrupt and holy too remains permanently present in his heart which is full of water symbolizing his devotion and love for the Lord.]”

Dohawali, verse no. 369:

369. जड़ चेतन गुन दोष मय बिस्व कीन्ह करतार ।
संत हंस गुन गहहिं पय परिहरि बारि बिकार ॥

369. jara cētana guna dōṣa maya bisva kīnha karatāra.
santa hansa guna gahahim paya parihari bāri bikāra..

The creator has created this animate as well as inanimate world full of virtues and goodness on the one hand, and vices and faults on the other hand. Saints and wise ones are like the Swan which is renowned for its ability to segregate milk (representing good virtues) from water (symbolizing not-so-good virtues), and then drink (accept) the milk while leaving behind (discarding) water as an adulterant.

[The Swan is cited in all the scriptures as a wise and discerning bird. It never drinks adulterated milk. It will drink only pure milk and leave the additional water that may have been added to dilute it. This ability sets it apart from all the members of the animal kingdom. Wise and intelligent men are compared to this wise bird for their ability to pick up good and auspicious qualities in this world and accept them, but reject those that are bad, mean and evil. Wisdom lies not in fretting and fuming over the paradoxes and ironies of this world, but in making the best of what is available.] (369)

[Note—This Doha appears in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, as Doha no. 6. The world is neither an entirely good place nor an entirely bad place to live in. It consists of all the good virtues as well as evil qualities. The best instance to understand it is the bar magnet—on one of its end there is the north pole, and on its other end is the south pole. These two opposite poles or ends exist in the

same piece of the magnet. It is important to note here that if any given thing is to be recognized as a ‘magnet’ then it is obligatory for it to have this characteristic feature—the north and the south poles. The Creator was wise while he was involved in the process of creation. This situation helps to maintain a balance of power between the good and the bad.

Just like it is equally important to have a night time and a day time—for otherwise the world would scorch to death if we had continuous sunlight, or freeze to death if there was constant darkness without the benefit of heat of the sun—it is also important to have good qualities and bad qualities. This helps the Creator to judge the creature and determine who is eligible for upliftment reward, and who for demotion and punishment.]

Section 5.2

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 285:

करौं काह मुख एक प्रसंसा । जय महेस मन मानस हंसा ॥ ५ ॥

karauri kāha mukha ēka prasansā. jaya mahēsa mana mānasa hansā. 5.

Sage Parashuram praised Lord Ram and said: “Oh Lord! How can I praise you with a single mouth? [That is, even if I had thousands of mouths I won’t have been able to sufficiently praise you and your glories.]

Glory to the Lord (Ram) and hail him who floats like a divine Swan in the lake of Lord Shiva’s heart¹. (5)

[Note—¹In this symbolism, Lord Shiva’s heart, which is pious and holy, is compared to a lake of crystal clear water, and Lord Ram to a majestic Swan that floats in a lake. It is because Lord Shiva remains eternally immersed in the thoughts of his beloved Lord Ram.]

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Appendix: no. 1

The Chakras & Naadis in the body

In this appendix we shall study the different Chakras of the body which symbolise the subtle energy centers or circles located in various parts of the body, while the Naadis are the ducts through which this subtle energy flows within the body.

Here we shall read about the following topics:-

- (A) Location and shape of the Chakras.
- (B) Influence of Chakras on the personality of a man.
- (C) The colours of the Chakras.
- (D) Naadis in the Body.
- (E) The Kundalini theory.
- (F) Relationship of Chakras with Gyan (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion) and Yoga (meditation).

(A) Location and shape of the Chakras

(i) 'Bhug' is triangular in shape and represents the female genital organ.

(ii) The 'Kanda' (literally meaning the root like structure, a tuber root, e.g. radish) is located 12" above the opening of the anus, has a diameter of 4", is cylindrical in shape, about twelve finger-widths long and covered by a jelly-like soft membrane.

(iii) The 'Mooladhar Chakra' represents the earth element, and its Beej (i.e. the root syllable) is the Sanskrit letter Lam (ल). It is located between the genitals and the anus in the area called the pelvic plexus or the perineum. It is the site of the symbolic Shiva Lingam (Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 168) and the route through which the Apan wind finds its entrance in the Kundalini (Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 13). It is also here that the ascetic hears the Naad. It is said to be a symbol of Shakti or the dynamic powers of Shiva principle (Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 8, 11-12 and Canto 3, verse no. 2).

(iv) The 'Swadhisthan Chakra' is located above the groins of males and the Bhug area of females. It has a symbolic 5-headed male phallus like a sprouting seed, and its counterpart in the female is the clitoris—it is called Hypogastric plexus. It forms the base of the genitals. It represents the water element, and its Beej (i.e. the root syllable) is the Sanskrit letter Vam (व).

The Chakras 1-4 are related to the sexual reproduction cycle marking the creation of the world. Hence are called 'Kaam' (lust, passion, desire), and are associated with the fire element.

(v) The 'Kundalini' is located at the base of the spine between the navel and Swadhisthan Chakra in the upper part of the Moolkand, and it is coil shaped having three and a half loops. Its one end blocks the entrance to the Sushumna nerve (Naadi) rising from the base of the spine and going right up to the head. Therefore, we conclude that Kundalini lies dormant at the base of the spine.

(vi) The 'Manipur Chakra' is located in the navel area, is shaped like a gem and is surrounded by the network of Naadis (nerves) called the solar plexus. It is also the site of the symbolic solar energy in the body as it is located in a region where the Sun is said to present in a symmolic manner in the body, i.e. in the region between the navel and heart. It represents the fire element, and its Beej (i.e. the root syllable) is Ram or Rung (pronounced as in Rum or Rung--(ॠ)).

(vii) The 'Anahat Chakra' is located in the chest around the heart area and it is shaped like a swan looking downwards. It is also assumed to be like a 8-petal lotus facing down. It is also called the Hridaya Chakra or the cardiac plexus. It represents the air/wind element, and its Beej (i.e. the root syllable) is the Sanskrit letter Yam (ॠ).

(viii) The 'Vishuddha Chakra/Kanth Chakra' is located in the pit of the throat. To the left of it passes the Eda nerve representing the moon, to its right goes the Pingla nerve representing the sun, and in the center is the Sushumna nerve through which the Kundalini energy rises up from the base of the spine to the skull. It is called pharyngeal plexus. It represents the sky (ether) element, and its Beej (i.e. the root syllable) is the Sanskrit letter Ham (ॡ)

(ix) The 'Talu Chakra' also called Raajdant as well as Ghantikaa. It is the route which leads to the so-called the 10th door of Brahm which is the Brahm Randhra at the top of the head. The word 'Talu' means the roof of the mouth cavity, the palate. Hence, the 'Talu Chakra' is located at the rear end of the palate at the back of the mouth cavity and near the base of the tongue. This site is where the cavity of the mouth opens into the wind pipe linking the lungs and the nostrils.

(x) The 'Agya Charka or Bhru Chakra' is located between the eyebrows and root of the nose. It is also called the third eye of enlightenment and wisdom. It represents the Mahat (that which transcends the elements) and its Beej (i.e. its root syllable) is the Sanskrit monosyllabic word OM.

(xi) The 'Brahm Randhra Chakra or Sahasraar Charka' is located in the head below the cranium and has the form of a 1000-petal lotus. It has the form of a grey cloud or smoke. It is near the hair-like spilt in the top of the skull from where the vital wind called 'Pran' makes its exit from the body of a Yogi (ascetic) at the time of his death.

(xii) The 'Vyom Chakra' is symbolic of the sky and it is shaped like a 10-petal lotus located at the top of the head below the skull.

(B) Influence of Chakras on the personality of a man

The seven main Chakras determine the general temperament, outlook, nature, demeanors and overall personality of a man. The chief traits or positive virtues that are influenced by these seven Chakras are listed below:- (i) Muladhar Charka relates to the virtue of innocence.

(ii) Swadhisthan Chakra relates to creativity.

(iii) Nabhi Chakra has an influence on peace.

(iv) Heart Chakra controls such emotions as love and compassion.

(v) Kantha Chakra helps generate collectivity because it is through the throat that a man can call out to someone and collect and address a crowd.

(vi) Bhru Chakra is the center of wisdom, and hence controls forgiveness, fortitude and tolerance.

(vii) Brahm Randhra Charka deals with intellect and mind since it is located at the top of the head. Hence, it controls integration and coordination.

(C) The colours of the Chakras

(i) The Mooladhar Chakra has the Red colour.

(ii) The 'Swadhisthan Chakra' has the Orange colour.

(iii) The 'Manipur Chakra' has the Yellow colour. (A combination of Red and Green)

(iv) The 'Anahat Chakra' has the Green colour.

(v) The 'Vishuddha Chakra or Kantha Chakra' and the 'Taluka Chakra' both have the Blue colour with the hue of smoke-grey (dull or light shade of blue).

(vi) The 'Bhru Chakra or Agya Chakra' has the Indigo colour which adds a bluish tinge to the cloudy subtle space of the head.

(vii) The 'Brahm Randhra Chakra' has light Blue colour.

(viii) The 'Sasaraar or Vyom Chakra' has the Violet colour and has the form of a grey cloud or smoke.

The Chakras, as the name suggests, are the subtle 'whirling wheels of stupendous divine energy' in the body. The Chakras are located along the spinal cord from its base to the top of the head. These Chakras manage the body's energy system. They receive, assimilate and distribute the energy throughout the body and the spinal nerve system.

Malfunctioning Chakras have a negative impact on the body; they restrict or block the movement of vital energies and winds inside the body. The different ways to keep these Chakras in fine-tuned condition are—meditation, Yoga exercises, various postures, chanting of Mantras etc. The properly functioning Chakras keep the endocrine glands functioning properly so that the hormones can regulate the proper functioning of the body. The immune system of the body is activated, diseases are naturally

fought and detoxification process speeded up in the body. A sketch depicting the Chakras is appended to this appendix.

Now let us examine some of the Upanishads and what they have to say on these Chakras.

The names of the six main Chakras and their location are clearly mentioned in *Yog Kundalini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse nos. 9-11 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. To quote—

“Verse no. 9-11 = The spiritual aspirant should learn about the six Chakras of the body¹ and then find rest (i.e. fix his attention and the energy of the Pran and consciousness) in the Chakra which gives him extreme sense of bliss and ecstasy (i.e. the Sahasraar Chakra).

The six Chakras are the following—Mooladhar, Swadhisthan, Manipur, Anaahat, Vishudha and Agya [9 ½].

The Mooladhar is situated near the anus, the Swadhisthan near the genital, the Manipur in the area around the navel, the Anaahat in the heart region, the Vishudha in the pit of the throat, and the Agya in the forehead [11]. (9-11)”.

The *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 168 of Krishna Yajur Veda describes this Mooladhar Chakra and the Kanda situated on it as the Shiva’s Lingam. This same Upanishad describes the other Chakras as well, and introduces them at two levels— (a) one at the micro level of the individual creature’s body (Canto 1, verse nos. 169-175), and (b) the other at the macro level of creation (Canto 1, verse nos. 176-178).

Now let us see what it has to say on this subject:—

(a) The Chakras at the micro level of the individual creature’s body (*Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 168-175)—

“Verse no. 168 = In fact, this human body is the medium by which one can obtain all spiritual successes and get emancipation and salvation for their souls as well as liberation and deliverance from this world, i.e. find Moksha and Mukti respectively. Since this body provides all these spiritual facilities to an aspirant, it is likened to a temple of Lord Shiva. [This is because a man goes to a temple to worship its deity to obtain the latter’s blessings for one’s wish fulfillment and seek divine intervention for all his worldly problems. But a worldly temple does not provide the same spiritual experience that one gets if he treats his own body as the temple of Shiva. In the latter case, the experience becomes very personal and unforgettable, and therefore requires no further proof of its veracity and truthfulness. Which temple is better than one’s own body where the supreme transcendental Brahm resides as one’s own Atma?]

The honourable and revered deity represented by the Shiva’s Lingam is established on a pedestal called the Mooladhar Chakra situated in the region between the anus and the genital. [It is situated slightly to the left and rear of the Mooladhar. Refer also to Canto 6, verse no. 33, and Canto 2, verse no. 6. This Lingam refers to the Mool Kanda.] (168).

“Verse no. 169 = The Jiva (living being) is Shiva personified, and the Mooladhar is its foundation or base. It is here that the great source of cosmic energy is established in the coiled structure called the Kundalini (169).

“Verse no. 170-171 = The place which is the progenitor of all the winds and the air element, which is self-illuminated as it is the creator of the fire element and its inherent light, which is the source of Naad and its concentrated energy represented by its Bindu (the dot placed on the top of the symbol of Naad represented by the Mantra OM), which is the creator of the Jiva (the living being; the creature) in its pure and fundamental form known as the ‘Hans’ (a reference to the Atma of the creature residing in the subtle heart and which is pure consciousness and true identity of the Jiva), which is also the progenitor of the subtle Mana (mind and its emotional aspect, the heart), and which is the place from where all desires and yearnings originate—this place is called ‘Kaam Roop Peeth’, or the seat from where all worldly desires and passions spring forth. [It is also called the Bhag Chakra.] (170-171).

“Verse no. 172 = The Swadisthan Chakra is situated at the base of the genital and has the shape of a lotus with thousand petals.

The Manipurak Chakra is located in the region of the navel and it is shaped like a lotus with ten petals (172).

“Verse no. 173 = Oh Kamal Sambhav (i.e. Brahma)! The Anahat Chakra is situated in the region of the heart and it is shaped like a lotus having twelve petals.

The second seat called Purna Giri Peeth is located here (173).

“Verse no. 174 = The Vishudha Chakra is located in the pit of the throat and it is shaped like a lotus having sixteen petals.

The third Peeth called the Jalandhar Peeth is located here (174).

“Verse no. 175 = The Agya Chakra is located between the two eyebrows and is shaped like a lotus having two petals.

The fourth Peeth called the Uddiyan Mahapeeth is located on it (175).”

The Chakras at the macro level of creation (Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 176-178)—

“Verse no. 176 = The Chaturastra Chakra is located at the site where the earth (representing the living creation and the visible world) has its beginning, and its patron deity is Lord Brahma, the creator.

After that is the Chakra shaped like a crescent moon, called the Ardha Chandrakar Chakra. Its patron deity is Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation. This Chakra is situated on the water element (176).

“Verse no. 177 = The Agni Chakra representing the fire element is triangular in shape and its patron deity is Lord Rudra (Shiva), the concluder of creation.

The Vayu Chakra representing the wind or air element is shaped like a hexagon and its patron deity is Ishwar, the Supreme Being (177).

“Verse no. 178 = The Akash Chakra representing the sky or space element is shaped like a circle and its patron deity is Sada-Shiva (the eternal truthful Brahm).

The Bindu is in the form of Naad located in the middle of the eyebrows. This is the site of the Mana (mind and intellect) (178).

The *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in verse nos. 43-49 describes the two main Chakras at the lower end of the body—viz. the Muladhar Chakra and the Swadisthan Chakra. To quote—

“Verse no. 43 = The two subtle energy centers at the lower end of the body are the Muladhar Chakra and Swadisthan Chakra (43).

“Verse no. 44-45 = Between these two (Muladhar and Swadhisthan Chakras) is located the area (site) responsible for reproduction. It is called the ‘Kaamroop’ because it is a personification of such qualities as passion, lust and desires that a creature has.

At the base of the anus there is a Chakra shaped like a Lotus with four petals. In the center of this is located the famous center of cosmic creative energy called ‘Kamakhya’. This is adored by acclaimed practitioner (because it has the same potential to ‘create’ that is also possessed by the supreme Lord of creation).

To the front of this Kamakhya is the male organ present outside the body in the anterior side of the anus (44-45).

“Verse no. 46-47 = There is a self-illuminated center of light resembling a priceless gem, symbolising the fount of a natural source of wisdom, intelligence, thoughts and discrimination. A person who is well acquainted with it is said to be an expert in Yoga.

Located at a distance measuring the width of four fingers from the epicenter of the fire element (called the Kundalini located at the base of the spine) and below the pubic bone is situated the Gonad (the testicles in the male), the organ which produces the cells responsible for reproduction. It is symbolically radiant and glowing like the hue of molten gold, and brilliant and splendorous like the dazzling streak of electric. [That is, it is a center of a very powerful source of dynamic creative energy that has the potential to generate new life in the form of a new creature from one single cell of the mother, i.e. the egg, and one from the father, i.e. the sperm. The metaphors of the ‘molten gold’ and ‘electric’ are used here to indicate the stupendous energy and dynamism of creation that is concentrated in this part of the body. If the forehead is the site for wisdom and erudition, this lower end of the body, i.e. the gonad, is equally important if the creation is to be perpetuated.

The Swadhisthan Chakra is at the base of this center (46-47).

“Verse no. 48-49 = The area of the Swadhisthan Chakra is called the pelvic region. This site has the vital wind (the Apaana Vayu) and it is illuminated like a gem. [This is because it is the centre of the body harbouring such glorious centers of energy as the Kundalini, the Swadhisthan Chakra, the Muladhar Chakra and the reproductive organs.]

The Manipurak Chakra is situated in the region of the navel. It is shaped like a Lotus having twelve petals. It is the area that controls ‘Punya’ and ‘Paap’ done by an individual. In other words, it is the center that controls life in as much as it is through it that the embryo draws nourishment from the mother through the placenta, and being so nourished it develops and takes birth as a creature that does this and that deed in this physical world. Each deed done by him is classified as either good or bad, the

former being called ‘Punya’ or something categorised as auspicious and noble, and the other is called ‘Paap’ or something demoted to the lowly class of sins and inauspiciousness (48-49).”

These Chakras and the various Peeths associated with them have also been described in *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse nos. 5-15. To quote—

“Verse no. 5 = [The following verse nos. 5-15 describe the various Chakras and Peeths in the body. Reference should be made to *Yograj Upanishad* which describes them in similar terms.]

The area between the anus and the genital has the triangular Mooladhar. This is said to be the symbolic abode of Lord Shiva (i.e. the Shiva Lingam is said to be established here).

In fact, the Jiva (the living being) is Shiva personified (5).

[Note—Refer Canto 1, verse no. 168 and 177, and Canto 2, verse nos. 5-13.]

“Verse no. 6 = [Verse nos. 6-12 describe the various Chakras and Peeths in the body and are similar to verse nos. 168-175 of Canto 1.]

The great center of transcendental cosmic energy subtly present in the body is located here as the Kundalini. It is here that the vital winds of life as well as the fire element inherently present in the body get their subtle energy to keep themselves active (6).

“Verse no. 7 = It is here that the Bindu (the subtler dynamic forces that reveal themselves as life), Naad (the sound symbolising the revelation of this dynamic force in the form of energy represented by sound waves), Hans (the conscious Atma residing in the subtle heart and which breathes air that produces the sound ‘Hans Hans’ as it goes in and out of the body through the nostrils and throat; the rustling, hissing, rasping or bristling sound heard when one puts one’s ears close to the heart) and Mana (mind, the subtle body of this Atma) have their origin (7).

“Verse no. 8 = The Peeth (holy pilgrim site) that blesses the worshipper by fulfilling all his desires and wishes is called the ‘Kaam Roop Peeth’ and is symbolically located on the Swadhisthan Chakra. It has a hexagonal shape and situated at the base of the genitals (8).

“Verse no. 9 = The Manipurak Chakra is located in the Nabhi (navel) area. It has ten corners or petals.

The heart region has the Maha Chakra having twelve corners or petals. This Chakra cannot be harmed or suppressed or subdued in a living being (obviously because as long as the creature lives the heart continuous to beat uninterruptedly) [In other words, it is not possible to kill anyone by pressing the heart so as to force it to stop beating. This fact can easily be verified and understood in the context of the Kantha Chakra or the Vishudha Chakra located in the throat. If this Throat Chakra is pressed too hard the man suffocates to death, and on the contrary pressing of the Heart Chakra would only revive the sinking heart instead of shutting it down as usually done in emergencies when attempts are made to revive a patient suffering form a severe heart-stroke by thumping and pressing the heart.] (9).

“Verse no. 10 = Oh Kamalsambhav (Brhma)! This (Maha Chakra) is also called the Purna Giri Peeth.

The Visudha Chakra is situated in the bore or hollow of the throat. It has sixteen corners or petals (10).

“Verse no. 11 = The Jalandhar Peeth is located here (in the throat where the Vidudha Chakra is situated).

The Agya Chakra is situated between the two eyebrows. It is an excellent one with two corners or petals (11).

“Verse no. 12 = On the top of it (i.e. on the Agya Chakra) is located the Uddiyan Peeth.

All these sites in the body are symbolic abodes of the divine Shakti (the dynamic aspect of Brahm revealed as subtle energy centers) (12).

“Verse no. 13 = [Verse no. 13-15 describe the shape of the five elements from the Tantra philosophical point of view and similar to Canto 1, verse nos. 176-178.]

The realm of the earth has a symbolic four-cornered outline (shape). Its patron God is Brahma. The realm of the water has the symbolic shape of a crescent moon and its patron God is Lord Vishnu (13).

“Verse no. 14 = The realm of the fire element is triangular in shape, and its patron God is Lord Rudra (the angry form of Shiva).

The realm of the air or wind element has a hexagonal shape and its patron deity is Sankarshan¹ (14).

[Note—¹Sankarshan is the older brother of Lord Krishna, i.e. Balaram, according to the Purans. The word literally means ‘well drawn’. In his earlier incarnation, he was Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram. Laxman was an incarnation of Seshnath, the legendary hooded serpent on whom Lord Vishnu reclines on the surface of the cosmic ocean of milk known as Kshir Sagar. Hence, Sankarshan is Lord Seshnath who is supposed to support the earth on its hoods.]

“Verse no. 15 = The realm of the sky is rounded (and that is why we see the sky like a inverted hemisphere). Its patron deity is Sriman Narayan (Vishnu).

The realm of the Mana (mind) is in the area around the central point of the two eyebrows, and its symbolic form is the cosmic sound called Naad¹ (15).

[Note—¹The brain and its focal point where the virtues of wisdom and intelligence are located is externally marked by the tri-junction of the root of the nose and the two eyebrows. That is why when we have to pay special attention on anything or concentrate deeply on any subject or when we are in a contemplative or pensive mood, the eyebrows create a furrow at this point. It is a metaphoric way of saying that the body is attempting to focus its mind and intellect on the subject under consideration or is concentrating on something which requires special focusing of all the available powers of the brain. This point is also metaphorically said to be the location of the third eye of wisdom for the same reason. During the practice of Yoga, it is hear that the Yogi (the practitioner of Yoga) tries to fix his attention. According to ancient

iconography, Lord Shiva who is the greatest Yogi is said to radiate a beam of light from this point, the beam which is so powerful that it can reduce to ashes all worldly delusions and passions. This is symbolically depicted in the ancient Puranic story which says that once when Kaamdeo, the God of passions and lust, had tried to break Shiva's meditation on the behest of other Gods, Shiva had opened this third eye and the rays of light beamed out from it reduced to ashes Kaamdeo in an instant.

The ancient sages visualised that this point would be the focal point where the sight collected by the two eyes would be focused behind them in the mind (brain) in order to enable the man to see things with a sharply formed image having three-dimensions and in a cohesive and clear format. Otherwise, they thought, the images formed by the eye would be blurred and distorted.

The Mana takes the form of the Naad because one has to concentrate one's mind during meditation to hear it.]”

Some of the Upanishads dealing with the concept of Chakra are the following--Saubhagya Laxmi Upanishad, Canto 3 of Rig Veda tradition; Dhyanbindu Upanishad, verse nos. 43-49, Yogkundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 7, 67-69, 85-86, Canto 2, verse no. 49, Canto 3, verse nos. 8-11, 12-17, Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 50, 53-53; and Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 168-178 , Canto 5, verse nos. 5-15 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition; Yograjo-panishad, Yogchudamani Upanishad, and Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4 of the Sam Veda tradition.

(D) Naadis in the Body

(a) The concept of Naadi has been dealt with in all the major Upanishads dealing with Yoga—(a) Sam Veda's Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 5-22 ½, 35-42, 46-47, and Yogchudamani, verse nos. 15-21. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda's Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 67-76. (c) Krishna Yajur Veda's Kshuriko, verse nos. 8-20; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 23-31, 37; Yog Tattva; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 50-60; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 17-27; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 10-18. (d) Atharva Veda's Prashna Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 6; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 6; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse nos. 1, 9-11; Bhavana Upanishad, verse no. 2, stanza no. 20..

The word Naadi literally refers to a tubular duct present inside the body through which all the vital forces of life travel from one point to another and keep the body alive, active and healthy. It is through the Naadi that the vital winds known as Pran flow; it is through them that blood flows; it is through them that senses travel from the sense organs of the body to the brain and from the brain to all the corners of the body; it is through the Naadis that various juices and fluids of the body are secreted and made to reach their targeted areas. Even if one Naadi is damaged, the body suffers.

It is through the Naadis that are present in the body that Pran or life-consciousness represented by the various vital winds, sensory impulses and perceptions, and all other vital signs of life inside the body move. Yoga Upanishads

say that there are seventy two thousand Naadis radiating out from the Nabhi Kanda (refer Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 6).

Atharva Veda's *Prashna Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 6 describes the existence of one hundred chief Naadis around the heart, and each is divided into a hundred branches. Each of these branches gives out seventy two thousand more branches. Therefore the total number of Naadis springing out from the heart = 100 main Naadis x 100 sub-Naadis x 72000 more branches of each of these sub-Naadis = 72 0000000 total number of Naadis that branch out from the heart and go to each corner of the body.

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 5, verse nos. 22-30 describe fifteen Naadis. They are Sushumna, Alambusa, Kuhu (verse no. 23), Varuna, Yashawani, Pingla (verse no. 24), Payaswini, Saraswati (verse no. 25), Shankhini, Gandahari, Ida (verse no. 26), Hasit-jivaha, Vishwadora (27), Naad-dhara, Jwalanti (verse no. 29) and Para-randhra (verse no. 30).

According to *Jabal Darshan Upanishad* of Sam Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 6-8, out of these only fourteen Naadis are said to be the important ones—Sushumna, Pingla, Ida, Saraswati, Varuna, Pusha, Yashaswani, Hasit-jivaha, Alambusa, Kuhu, Vishwadora, Payaswini, Shankhini and Gandahari. Verse nos. 13-22 ½ of Canto 4 of the *Jabal Darshan Upanishad* describes the location and distribution of these Naadis in detail.

The *Bhavana Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 2, stanza no. 20 lists fourteen main Naadis and says that they represent fourteen forms of the divine Goddess known as the Shakti. To quote—"The following fourteen Naadis (tubular ducts in the body; the nerves and veins) are like the fourteen Goddess such as Sarwa-shanksho-bhini etc.—Alumbusa, Kuhu, Vishwodar, Varuna, Hastijivha, Yashaswani, Ashwini, Gaandhaari, Pusha, Shankhini, Saraswati, Ida, Pingla, and Sushumna Naadis (2/20)."

But according to *Yogchudamani Upanishad* of Sam Veda, verse no. 15-17, and *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 52-53, there are only ten Naadis that are more important. They are—Ida, Pingla, Sushumna, Gandhari, Hasti-Jivaha, Pusha, Yashaswini, Alambusa, Kuhu and Shankhini. Their location has been described in *Jabal Darshan Upanishad* of Sam Veda, Canto 4, verse nos. 13-17.

Again, even out of these, only three are of the greatest importance, and they are—Sushumna, Ida and Pingla.

The Sushumna is regarded as the best and the most important one even amongst these three. It goes through the central core of the spinal cord from its base in the Kundalini right upto the Brahm Randhra at the top of the head. [Refer—*Jabal Darshan Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 9-10]

The Ida goes to the left of it to the left nostril; and the Pingla goes to the right of it to the right nostril. [Refer—*Jabal Darshan Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 13] The Sushumna Naadi is called the Brahm Naadi, Ida Naadi is said to be the Chandra Naadi, and Pingla is said to be the Surya Naadi.

The *Shandilya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 4, verse nos. 1, 9-11 outlines the Naadis as follows—

"Verse no. 1 = Sage Shandilya asked sage Atharva, 'Oh Lord! What is the way to clean (purify, de-clog and revitalize) the Naadis? How many Naadis are there (in the body)? How were they created? How many vital winds flow in them? Where are they

located? What are their functions? In short, please enlighten me about all the things worth knowing in this body.’ (1).

“Verse no. 9 = There are fourteen main Naadis (tubular ducts through which the vital life-forces flow inside the body) that surround the Kundalini.

These Naadis are the following—Ida, Pingla, Sushumna, Saraswati, Varuni, Pusha, Hastajivha, Yashaswani, Vishwodari, Kuhu, Shankhini, Payaswani, Alambusa, and Ghandhari (9).

“Verse no. 10 = Wise ascetics assert that out of them the Sushumna Naadi is the main one, and it is capable of bearing the world (i.e. life) as well as is the path by which the ascetic attains Moksha (liberation and deliverance). [See the note of stanza no. 1 of verse no. 8 above.]

This Naadi lies at the rear of the anus and goes up the spinal cord to reach the top of the head where the Brahm-Randhra is situated. [See the note of stanza no. 2 of verse no. 8 above.]

It is clearly visible, very fine, and honoured as a pathway to Brahm who is worshipped as Lord Vishnu by his followers. [In other words, the Mantras used for doing Yoga (meditation and contemplation)—which would help in concentrating the mind and energy of the body for the purpose of activation of the Kundalini, which in turn would help the practitioner in realizing the bliss of experiencing Brahm or cosmic Consciousness—would be the Mantras of Lord Vishnu.] (10).

“Verse no. 11 = The Ida Naadi is situated to the left and the Pingla Naadi to the right of the main Naadi called the Sushumna Naadi. [The Ida and the Pingla are intertwined around the Sushumna.]

The energy of the Moon flows through the Ida Naadi, while that of the Sun flows through the Pingla Naadi.

[Now, the two opposing characteristics represented by the Moon and the Sun are being enumerated—] The Moon has a predominance of Tama Guna, while the Sun is dominated by the Raja Guna. [The Tama Guna is a metaphor for darkness and inertia, and that is why the disc of the Moon has no light of its own, and except for the full-moon night its disc is always darkened to some extent. Besides this, the Moon always shines in the night which is the period when the creature wishes to rest and shed all activities. On the other hand, the Raja Guna is associated with light and a desire to rise and be productive. This is why the Sun is self-illuminated and energetic, and its rise is associated with activity and productivity.]

The Moon is associated with Amrit or the ambrosia of life and bliss, while the Sun is linked to the scorching poison. [The soothing rays of the moonlight have a cooling effect on the scorched earth that was heated by the Sun during the day, and these rays are able to provide comfort and solace to the tormented creature. On the other hand, the sun’s rays are ferocious and cruel by nature, and they can scorch and burn if not guarded against. The white colour of the Moon’s disc is said to be due the colour of the Amrit or elixir of life and bliss stored in it by the Gods, while the Sun is said to the celestial cauldron of fire.]

These two join hands to bear the whole time between them. [That is, the full day is divided between the Moon and the Sun, and there is no phase of time beyond them or which does not fall within their jurisdiction.]

Since the Moon and the Sun symbolically move along the Ida and the Pingla Naadis as cited above, it follows that the Sushumna Naadi is the one that actually

bears or holds and enjoys everything governed by time. [In other words, it is around the Sushumna Naadi that the life of a creature revolves. It is this Naadi that sustains life and consciousness in the body of the creature, where the body itself is a world in miniature form and the creature is the Atma or the pure conscious soul that lives in this world. In simple terms this is brought about by the fact that the Sushumna Naadi is the central nerve of the spinal cord, and it is through this Naadi that all the impulses of the body move from one point to another. The nerves take all the impulses to the brain, and the latter's instructions to all the organs of the body. Should the Sushumna Naadi fail, the entire circuit would be disrupted and the 'world' (here represented by the 'body') would be 'dead' as far as the 'Jiva' (here the living being represented by his Atma) is concerned. It is like the case of the main overhead high-tension electric wire snapping and plunging the entire city in darkness.]

Behind the Sushumna Naadi is located the Saraswati Naadi, and to the side of it is the Kuhu Naadi.

The Vaaruni Naadi is situated between the Kuhu and the Yashaswani Naadis.

The Payaswani Naadi is situated between the Pusha and Saraswati Naadis.

The Yashaswani Naadi is situated between the Gaandhaari and the Saraswati Naadis.

The Alambusa Naadi is located in the center of the Kanda. [The 'Kanda' literally means a root or tuber, and it is shaped like a short carrot or turnip. Its pointed end faces downwards towards the male genitalia and its upper rounded end is near the navel. The Alumbusa Naadi runs along its center.]

The Kuhu Naadi is spread below the Sushumna Naadi till the area of the genitals.

The Vaaruni Naadi is spread in all the directions below and above the Kundalini.

The Yashaswani and the Saumya Naadis go up to the big toes of the two legs.

The Pingla Naadi goes upwards and reaches the right nostrils.

The Pusha Naadi rises behind the Pingla and goes up to the right eyes.

The Yashaswani Naadi goes up to the right ears.

The Saraswati Naadi goes up to the upper surface of the tongue.

The Shankhani Naadi moves up from below and reaches the left ear.

The Gaandhaari Naadi moves up behind the Ida Naadi and goes up to the left eye. [The Ida Naadi itself goes up to the left nostrils.]

The Alambusa Naadi radiates above and below the base of the anus.

Other minor Naadis are located inside or around these primary fourteen Naadis. There are finer Naadis inside them as well.

Just like the leaf of the banyan tree is covered by a network of veins and capillaries, the Naadis too cover each area of the creature's body¹ (11).

[Note—¹Verse no. 13 of this section says that there are in all seventy-two thousand Naadis through which the vital wind called the Samaan Vayu distributes nutrients extracted from the food eaten and digested inside the body to all its corners. Hence we conclude that the Naadis listed in verse no. 9 are only the chief ones, whereas the total numbers of Naadis are seventy-two thousand.]

(E) The importance of Naadi control and its Shodhan or purification—

The Naadis (nerves, capillaries, veins and other micro-fine tubular ducts in the body of the creature through which his vital signs of life flow) need to be purified,

cleansed, purged, reformed or de-clogged and revitalized to make the body function properly and enable the spiritual aspirant to make the best use of the latent energy of the divine Spirit that is lying dormant and untapped inside his own body for his long-term spiritual welfare. This process has been called 'Shodhan' in as much as it helps to purify and purge these Naadis of all sorts of impurities that have blocked them and prevent the free movement of vital airs and consciousness—which are synonymous with the life-factors inside the body of any living being—from moving in the body. The Upanishads dealing with Yoga (meditation) describe its various limbs or aspects, and they help in this Shodhan in a holistic manner. Some of the important principles of Yoga that aid in this endeavour are Pranayam (breath control and harnessing the vital winds inside the body), Aasans and Mudras (sitting and bodily postures that help to achieve success in Yoga), Bandhas (restrictions imposed on the body so that its vitality is retained inside and not dissipated and wasted), Yam and Niyams (the various regulations and codes of conduct that are to be strictly followed), Pratahyar (self control of the mind), Dharna (having firm conviction so that the aspirant can pursue his chosen path without getting distracted), Dhyana (concentration), etc. They all play an important role in Naadi Shodhan and compliment and supplement each other.

However, Pranayam is regarded as the main instrument of Naadi Shodhan because it helps the vital airs to give the required push needed to de-clog the already blocked Naadis. Besides this, Pranayam helps to stoke the dormant fire element present inside the Kundalini and other Chakras in the body.

The process of Naadi Shodhan in the context of the above discussion has been described in a number of Upanishads. In fact, the Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, in its Canto 2, verse no. 89 clearly states that Naadi Shodhan is done 'by following all the above paths comprehensively'. Other Upanishads are, inter alia, the following—(1) Sam Veda tradition's Jabal Darshano-panishad, canto 5-6, and Yogchudamanu-panishad, verse nos. 89-112; (2) Shukla Yajur Veda tradition's Trishikhi-Brahmano-panishad, verse nos. 2/89-120; (3) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition's Tejo-bindu, Dhyana Bindu, Kshuriko-panishad, verse nos. 18-20, and Yogshikha Upanishads.

Since Pranayam is the main backstay of Naadi Shodhan, a brief word about it would be in place. The word 'Pranayam' consists of two parts—'Pran' meaning the vital wind which sustains life, i.e. breath, and 'Yam' meaning restraint. So the 'Pranayam' involves exercising control over or regulating the regular flow of breath through a set of Yogic exercises.

This exercise has basically three phases—inhalation called 'Purak' (filling), the holding of breath called 'Kumbhak' (Kumbha means a pot or pitcher), and exhalation called 'Rechak' (cleaning, purging, de-clogging). To start with, the left nostril is closed with the help of fingers of the right hand and all the air inside the body is expelled through the right nostril. Then the breath is inhaled by the 'Eda Naadi' (i.e. left nostril), held in the abdomen for a fixed time, and then gradually exhaled through the 'Pingla Naadi' (or right nostril). The process is reversed and alternated with each other each time the breath is taken in and brought out.

The time or duration taken for inhalation is fixed as the time taken for mentally saying the 16 Maatraas (the vowel sounds of the Sanskrit alphabet). It should be held inside the body (Kumbhak) for a time which is 4 times the time taken for inhalation (i.e. the time taken for 64 Maataras to be said mentally). The gradual letting out of the breath is twice the time taken for inhalation (or 32 Maatraas). By practice, the Kumbhak phase (holding of breath) should be extended to 80 Maatraas. [Jabal Darshan Upanishad 6/3-9, Trishikhi Brahmin, 2/96-97.]

‘Pranayam’ should be done by an ascetic four times a day—(a) during the predawn hours before sun-rise, (b) at noon, (c) evening hours at sun-set, and (d) midnight (Trishikhi Brahmin, 2/101). ‘Pranayam’ produces three visible effects—(a) first the body begins to perspire. This is considered the lowest stage and the sweat should be rubbed on the skin (Yog Chudamani, verse no. 41), (b) in the second stage, the body shivers and shakes. This is the medium stage; and (c) finally, the body starts gradually lifting upwards like a hot air balloon. This is the best stage (Trishikhi Brahmin, verse nos. 104-105 and Jabal Darshan, 6/14).

All major Upanishads that deal with the subject of Yoga invariably deal with this topic of Naadi purification because it is an inseparable part of the entire process of Yoga.

The metaphysical importance of Naadi control and its Shodhan or purification has been elaborately explained in *Kshuriko-panishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 18-20. To quote this particular Upanishad—

“Verse no. 18-19 = ‘Dhyan Yoga’, literally meaning meditative exercises done by intense concentration of the mind and use its energy as if it were a sharp-edged knife (much like the use of laser beams to perform complicated surgery in modern medicine), can be employed by the practitioner of Yoga (i.e. by the seeker of true liberation and deliverance) to rupture or pierce through or bore into all the Naadis and let the Pran enter them. But the Sushumna Naadi is the only one which cannot be broken through or its sanctity violated¹.

A wise and sagacious person is one who pierces all the Naadis in this life itself. This is to ensure that his Pran or vital winds and life forces present in his body, which had been till now wandering aimlessly in the subtle space inside the gross body, is able to enter into these ducts and move up the correct path that can lead to its proper destination. Since the wind trapped inside the body has originated from the all-pervading free wind or air element present in the cosmic space, its ‘natural destination’ is this cosmic space, and its ‘liberation’ is its escape from the enclosure of the gross body and mingling with the parent body of the cosmic wind outside. This is its final ‘deliverance’ from all artificial entrapments created by the gross body because once outside, the air element would merge indistinguishably with the cosmic wind element and lose its independent identity. A realised ascetic allows this to happen when he uses the will power and determination of his mind to forcefully make his Pran to bore into the various Naadis, and move inside them. Once inside, the energised and heated Pran unclogs all the veins and nerves by its mere power of force and detoxifying abilities, and moves freely inside them. It gradually moves up the body much like hot air, allowed to enter a network of tubes, has a propensity to move freely inside them and head upwards because of the fact that any hot air moves up and not down. Pran, being lighter or ‘subtler’ than all the other elements in the body because it now resembles hot and energised air or vital wind element, has overcome all resistance and is able to enter that path that leads to arousal of the hitherto dormant spiritual energy lying trapped in the heart as the pure consciousness of the creature. Determined and steadfast practice of meditation, along with contemplation on the main objective of doing Yoga and concentrating upon the Truth, keeps the ascetic firmly on his path.

In its final leg, the Pran is able to sufficiently gather enough energy and force and momentum to unfurl the energy in the coiled Kundalini² at the bottom of the spine. When the Pran sneaks into it, it finds entry into the Sushumna Naadi which has

its lower end blocked by this Kundalini. Heated vital winds then snake up this tube, much like mercury moving up the thermometer, and finally reach the top of the head at the spot called the Brahm-Randhra. When the pressure builds up, the final explosion occurs, and this Brahm-Randhra splits open, allowing the Pran to escape into the outer space for ever. This stage is called 'Kaivalya Mukti', or the 'one of its kind' of liberation and deliverance for the aspirant seeking freedom, because once the Pran merges with the cosmic wind or air element, there is no question of its re-entering the body. This is because the body of such an ascetic is allowed to disintegrate into its basic elements, such as the earth, water and fire. The subtle space inside the body would then automatically coalesce with the open space outside. No trace of the earlier creature remains. This is obviously the final closure of the scene for him.

Thus, the wise and sagacious practitioner of Yoga should use the inviolable authority and majestic influence of his Atma, i.e. the astounding supernatural power of the pure conscious 'self', to firmly direct and strictly order the mind and the intellect to use their stupendous abilities and skills along with the energised and heated vital winds called Pran present inside the body to jointly rupture and bore through the different Naadis and penetrate them. That is, the wise ascetic uses the stupendous and powerful authority inherently bestowed in his own 'self', called his pure conscious Atma, to diligently and purposefully divert all the efforts of the two powerful instruments that he has at his disposal, i.e. the Mana (mind) and the Pran (vital winds and other life forces inside the body), to actively practice strict Yoga (as described in this Upanishad).

This Yoga practice then becomes as powerful and effective as a heated sharp-edged knife or 'Kshuri' that enables the ascetic to symbolically cut through the Naadis in a surgical and precise fashion. The revitalizing Pran then enters them and completely fills them. Then the Naadis become as vibrant and invigorated as the healthy Jasmine flower which gives out a sweet fragrance typical of it (18-19).

[Note—¹In other words, since this Sushumna Naadi symbolically represents the eternal and irrefutable Truth in creation, and remains soaked in its exuberant glory as mentioned in verse no. 16 above, it is impossible to subdue it and cause any disturbance in its serenity. This is a metaphoric way of saying that once the ascetic reaches that stage of self-realisation and Brahm-realisation when he has realised the actual Truth and the eternal fount of beatitude and felicity attendant with it, no force in creation can ever sway him from his exalted stature. He is deemed to have reached the pinnacle of spiritual achievement where he becomes invincible for the myriad temptations and delusions surging in the world which drown all other creatures in their swirling whirlpool.

The word pierce when used in the spiritual context is to overcome the resistance of the physical body and its various components, including the Naadis, to any effort that causes inconvenience or discomfort to it. Yoga is a rigorous self-disciplining spiritual exercise that does not compromise on principles. Since the body is accustomed to remaining engrossed in comforts and enjoying pleasures emanating from the material world, it is natural for it to resist any change in the status and be subjected to control and discipline. The Naadis are singled out for such 'piercing or rupturing' or vanquishing or overcoming or subduing because it is through the network of Naadis that the body keeps itself alive as consciousness flows through them. The Naadis carry

sense impulses from one part of the body to the other; it is through them that the blood flows; it is through the Naadis that the mind is able to receive the sensory inputs from the sense organs located on the surface of the body and then help the body to respond; it is the Naadis which are like the central network of wires and circuits of an electronic equipment. If the Naadis are blocked or made to stop working, the body would be as good as dead. Hence, the best way to control the entire edifice of the body is to control its command and control network in the form of the Naadis.

²Kundalini—The Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 12-16 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is dedicated entirely on this concept of Kundalini. Other major Upanishads that deal with the topic of Yoga also deal with the concept of Kundalini because both are intertwined and inter-related concepts.]

“Verse no. 20 = In this way, the wise ascetic should properly understand how to establish his control over the different Naadis, those which are conducive to his spiritual upliftment and therefore considered ‘Shubh’ or auspicious (such as the Virja, Pingla and Ida Naadis) as well as those which relate more to his worldly interactions and mundane existence (such as the Naadis that control his digestive, excretory and reproductive functions).

The Sushumna Naadi is superior to all the Naadis in the body, and the wise and sagacious ascetic is one who focuses his attention on this Naadi. That is, he diligently practices to divert his Pran (vital winds and life-infusing conscious factors) into this duct and channelise the Pran’s energy into activating it so that the Pran can ultimately reach the point on the top of the head, the Brahm-Randhra, from where it can finally make its exit from the body for good, thereby liberating the ascetic from the shackle of the gross body for ever, and delivering his soul from the compulsion of having to live in this body to the accompaniment of its associated torments.

When his attention is exclusively and firmly fixed on this Sushumna Naadi, he obtains access to the supreme transcendental Brahm representing the eternal fount of truth, beatitude and felicity. This achievement provides him with permanent liberation and deliverance from the body. In other words, he does not have to take birth again with a body¹ (20).

[Note—¹This is because he has already detached himself from all the deeds done by the body, being totally unattached with the latter, and not-involved in the world in which the body lives, thereby freeing him from either being associated with these deeds and their consequences, whether good or bad, or with any of the entrapments of the world and the latter’s tainting effects. He has also realised the delusory nature of the artificial world of material objects, and therefore has lost all charms and attractions for it along with the material comforts and sensual pleasures that it offers to the creature. With no baggage of insatiate desires and yearnings, no unfulfilled aspirations and hopes, he has nothing pending and unfulfilled at the time of death for which he would want to take another birth in order to finish off his incomplete tasks or fulfill his dreams. This state of total and sincere renunciation entitles him to become a ‘liberated’ soul, and since ‘soul’ is an disembodied ethereal body of infinite cosmic proportions, being another form of the cosmic wind or air element, it simply coalesces with this element as soon as the ascetic dies and the Pran

leaves the gross body by rupturing the skull at the point of the Brahm-Randhra.

In this context, refer Amrit Naad Upanishad, verse no. 27, and Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 12-17 both of which belong to the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]”

(F) The movement of Pran in the main Naadis—

The Prans are the different vital airs or winds present inside the body that not only infuse the vital spark of life inside the body but are often used as a synonym for the life-consciousness that is present in the body of a living being that distinguishes it from a body that has no life in it. In other words, Pran and Atma are the two sides of the same coin known as the living creature.

The main Naadis and the movement of Pran in them have been described in *Paingalo-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 12. It says that when the creature is in dreaming state of existence, his Prans move along the various Naadis present in the body.

The Dhyani Bindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 52-60 describes briefly the main ten Naadis, their location, and how the different vital airs/winds called the Prans in the body move in them. To quote this Upanishad—

“Verse no. 52-53 = Out of these (seventy two Naadis) there are only ten main Naadis through which the Pran (vital life giving forces present inside the body) move or pulsate. They are the following—Ida, Pingla, Sushumna, Gandhari, Haritijvha, Pusha, Yashaswani, Alumbusa, Kuhu, and Shankhini (52-53).

[Note—Refer Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 13-17 of Sam Veda tradition which describes how these ten main Naadis branch out to different part of the body from the Kanda.]

“Verse no. 54-57 = Practitioners of Yoga are expected to have a thorough knowledge of these Naadi network. The three main Naadis amongst these are the Ida, Pingla and Sushumna, and the vital life known as Pran continuously pulsates and moves inside them. The patron God of Ida Naadi is Sun, of Pingla is Moon, and of Sushumna is Fire.

The Sushumna is in the center of the other two Naadis, the Ida being to its left and Pingla to its right. These three Naadis are like the highway through which the Pran moves.

The ten vital winds in the body are called Pran. They are the following—Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Udaana, Vyan, Naaga, Kurma, Krikar, Devdutta, and Dhananjaya. Out of them, the first five are the chief Prans while the last five are subsidiary Prans¹ (54-57).

[Note—¹According to various Upanishads, especially the Trishiki Brahmin Upanishad, 1/5 and 2/77-87, and Paingalo-panishad, cantos 2, verse nos. 3 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, the ‘Pran’ (vital wind) is classified into ten types depending upon the function that the wind element performs in the body of a creature. Amongst them, there are five winds which are considered more important than the rest. As such, these five are called the main ‘Pran’, or

‘Panch Prans’, and they are the following:—(1) Pran, the wind element, as breath, that is exhaled as well as inhaled, and which is responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the body; it is considered the chief wind in the whole setup because without life no other wind would be of any significance to the creature; (2) Apaana, the wind that passes down the intestines and is responsible for digestion of the food taken by the creature and its excretion through the anus and urinary organs (kidneys); (3) Samaana, the wind that is responsible for equal distribution of nourishment throughout the body, as well as in circulation of blood; (4) Udaana, the wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases in the body through the nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough; and (5) Vyana, the wind that helps in maintaining equilibrium and pressure within the body, and it also controls the functioning of the other winds.

Besides the above, there are five subsidiary winds which act more like assistants to the chief Prans. They are:- (1) Naaga—this junior wind which helps in exhaling breath and belching; (2) Kurma—this subsidiary wind helps the eyelids to open and shut; (3) Krikan—this creates the sensation of hunger; (4) Devdutta—this creates sleep; and (5) Dhananjaya—it prevents decay and deformation of the body immediately after death for some time.

According to Subala Upanishad, canto 9, verse no.1-14 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, these ten winds have the following functions—(1) Pran—this controls eyes and the faculty of sight (verse 1); (2) Apaana—this controls ears and the faculty of hearing (verse 2); (3) Vyana—this controls nose and the faculty of smell (verse 3); (4) Udaana—this controls the tongue and the faculty of taste (verse 4); (5) Samana—this controls the skin and the faculty of touch (verse 5); (6) Vairambha—this controls speech (verse 6); (7) Mukhya—this controls the hands (verse 7); (8) Antarayama—this controls the legs (verse 8); (9) Prabhanjana—this controls the anus (verse 9); (10) Kurma—this controls the genitals (verse 10); (11) Shyena—this controls the Mana or the thoughts and emotions (verse 11); (12) Krishna—this controls the discrimination, intellect and wisdom (verse 12); (13) Shweta—this controls Ahankara or the notion of ego, pride, arrogance, vanity etc. (verse 13); (14) Naaga—this controls the ‘Chitta’ or the faculty of concentration, memory, sub-conscious, reasoning (verse 14).

Location of the five chief vital winds, called the Panch Prans, in the body—(1) Pran—it is present in the mouth, nose, heart, navel, big toe of the leg; (2) Apaana—it is present in the intestines and anus, lower abdomen, thighs, knees; (3) Samana—it is uniformly present throughout the body; (4) Udaana—it is present in the hands, legs, joints of the body; and (5) Vyana—it is located in the ears, thighs, waist, heels, shoulders, throat. The subsidiary winds as listed above, i.e. Naaga, Kurma, Krikan, Devdutta and Dhananjaya are located in the skin, muscles and the bones.

Besides the Upanishad mentioned above, there are others that elaborately describe the vital winds, their locations, their functions, how they are satisfied, along with their significance. The chief amongst them are (1) Chandogya Upanishad in its canto 3, sections 13-18; canto 5, sections 19-23 (describes how the five winds are satisfied); and canto 7, section 15, (2) Jabal Darshan Upanishad, canto 4, verse no.23-24 of the Sam Veda tradition, (3) Maitrayanu Upanishad, canto 2, verse no.6-7 of the same Veda (which describes the functions of these winds), (4) Subala Upanishad, canto 9, verse no.1-14, (5)

Paingalo-panishad, canto 2, verse no.3 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, and (6) Amritnado-panishad, verse no. 33-38 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. These vital winds have also been elucidated upon in sage Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no. 38-39.]

“Verse no. 58 = The subtle vital forces of life called Pran collectively move and oscillate in these thousands of Naadis, injecting life or ‘Pran’ into the otherwise lifeless gross body of the creature. The living beings move up and down under the influence of the Pran and Apaana respectively¹ (58).

[Note—¹In metaphysical terms this means that they attain spiritual upliftment when their Pran is more active, while they get demoted to the mundane world of lowly life marked by grossness and inertia when the Apaana wind is more active. In more physical terms the movement of Pran refers to the process of breathing, while the movement of Apaana refers to the peristaltic movement that helps the food to move down the intestines. The breath (Pran) which brings in fresh oxygen-laden air inside the body and helps to rejuvenate the tissues on the one hand and removes toxic gases and other lighter waste products of the body when it is exhaled, and the movement of food in the alimentary canal, its digestion and expulsion of waste products from the body governed by the Apaana wind are both essential and indispensable parts of life because no life can survive without either of them.]

“Verse no. 59-61 = The Pran (here referring to the breath passing through the nostrils when one breathes) moves sometimes through the path which goes to the left (of the central Sushumna Naadi, i.e. through the Ida Naadi passing up to the left nostril), and sometimes through the one that goes to the right (of the central Sushumna Naadi, i.e. through the Pingla Naadi passing up to the right nostril). The Pran wind is so subtle and sublime that it cannot be visibly seen.

Just like a ball thrown at random by the player moves restlessly in various directions, bouncing here and there and changing its course every now and then unpredictably, the creature is also buffeted and kicked around (like the ball)¹ by the two prominent winds called the Pran and Apaana, and he moves restlessly in so many places (and in so many wombs or takes so many births).

The tug and pull of these two winds on the creature is much like a bird being pulled down by the string tied to its legs while it attempts to fly off in the sky². An ascetic who is well acquainted with this fact is regarded as really wise and enlightened (59-60).

[Note—¹The same idea has been described in Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 27-28 of Sam Veda tradition. It says—“Just like a ball or balloon being thrown or kicked around by players, a creature (an individual) cannot remain stable and steady for long because it is under the spell of Pran, Apaana and other vital winds¹ which constantly keep it restless, agitated, always mobile and fidgety and in a state of constant flux (27).

The creature, under the buffeting influence or thrust of the vital winds or airs, is compelled to move upwards or downwards, to the left and to the right (like an air-filled balloon) so swiftly that it loses its bearings and does not know what is happening to it² (28) [27-28]”.

These winds slap and dash against the sail of a ship on a high sea, as it were, tossing and turning it with the lashing of every gust. The creature cannot sit quietly and calmly in the ship because these vital wind forces continue to flap and flutter the sail, whipping the ship recklessly in the churning waters of the sea represented by this world.

The creature's body is like the balloon or a football, as it is filled with air called the vital winds. Even as a balloon or an air-filled light ball moves with the slightest touch, is easily tossed about violently in a squall or gale and it cannot remain at a single point for long even when there is no apparent breeze blowing, the creature also has an inbuilt and inherent natural tendency to be always on the move, remain restless and be fidgety. The biggest proof of this fact is witnessed when a dead body is observed. All the rest of the organs of a body while it was alive are present in a corpse, the only imperceptible element which has left the body is 'Pran' or the vital wind. The corpse becomes heavy than a living man and it lies motionless if it is not moved by others; it has no capacity to move on its own and it becomes heavy like lead. So it is clear that it was the 'Pran' that made the body light weight, agile and active much like the air-filled balloon or ball. Once the Pran leaves the body, the latter becomes heavy as lead.

The creature is flung around so rapidly in quick succession in waves of emotions and sentiments originating in its heart and mind due to the various influences of the external world that it is not able to discern and make out what is transpiring. It becomes completely disoriented in the topsy-turvy path of transmigration. It does not get a chance to bring itself together and realise who it is, what it truly is, where does it belong, what is the correct direction it should take and which direction it is actually heading to, where should it go and where it should not. Taking the example of a boat in a stormy high sea, the harried creature is so rapidly hurled and tossed about like a ball and thrown over board that it is more concerned with grabbing any float at hand just to avoid getting drowned than to focus on long term spiritual goals of life. Its immediate concern is the survival in the next moment, and not the moment beyond the first. Another good example would be a balloon or a dry leaf or a kite caught in a storm. There is no need to elaborate what happens to them. The allegory will aptly summarise the comic but alarming situation the trapped creature faces.

²The analogy of the bird is used here to emphasise the point that the creature has a natural tendency to remain free like the bird, but it allows itself to be tied voluntarily in shackles of delusions pertaining to this world out of its own ignorance, and its unending greed and desires, and gets trapped as a result much like the bird which falls for the trap laid for it by the cunning bird-catcher. The tug and pull in the world with its astounding variety of magnificent charms and fascinating colours, no matter how transient and horrifying they are in the long run, are nevertheless very enthralling and captivating for the time being for the creature, and the latter has no inclination to look ahead and see the horrendous consequences of falling for them. This is the 'downward pull of the Apaana wind', used here in a metaphoric way because it is this wind that moves down the body through the intestines and helps to push the eaten food down the alimentary canal and out through the anus. On the other hand, the Pran moves in the upwards directions as is obvious when we observe the breath which moves out of the lungs and goes

up to the nostril to be exhaled. This ‘upwards movement of the Pran’ is a metaphoric way of saying that the creature is seeking spiritual upliftment, it is ‘looking up’.]”

(G) The Naadis as avenues of a city—

According to *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 165, these Naadis are likened to main ‘avenues’ of a city represented by the body in which the Atma, the true ‘self’ of the creature lives during its sojourn in this world.

(H) The Naadi Chakra—

This is a circular structure located below the navel and in the region of the internal genital organs. Its nearest neighbours are the Kanda and the Kundalini. It is from here that all the Naadis (nerves) of the body originate. The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 5, verse no. 22 describes the Naadi Chakra. To quote—”The Naadi Chakra is a wheel-like structure where all the Naadis have their central origin, and is located in this region (of the Kanda which is an elongated tuberos structure located inside the body between the genitals and the anus). This Chakra is like a circular saw with an edge that has twelve serrations. This Naadi Chakra is said to the center which bears the body, which supports the body. [The reason is that if the nerves fail, the entire body’s normal functioning fails. Such a body is a burden on its own self.]

The Kundalini (the coiled subtle energy center of the body) is also located here (22).”

(I) The place of origin of the main Naadis—

The Dhyani Bindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 50-51 says that the Naadis have their origin in the Kanda. To quote—”It is only till the time that the living being is not aware of the essential truths behind these (reproductive) organs that he remains trapped in the whirlpool or net of delusions and ignorance¹.

Above the region of the perineum and below the navel is the cluster of Naadis (ducts in the body; the nerves and veins) called the Kanda (literally meaning a root like structure like the sweet potato or carrot or radish). It is from here that seventy two thousand Naadis originate. From amongst them, there are seventy two Naadis that are more important (50-51).

[Note—¹That is, till the time a man does not understand that the reproductive organs are meant to carry forward the legacy of the supreme Brahm in the way of procreation, and are not at all meant for sexual indulgences and gratification of carnal desires of the body, he remains trapped in ignorance-induced delusions and swept off in its tide. That is, he foolishly thinks that his sexual organs are meant for sexual enjoyments, pleasures and self-gratifications instead of realising that they are tools to participate in the cosmic scheme of creation. This eclectic thinking should be natural to a wise and enlightened

man because he is deemed to be one who is aware that he is not an ordinary mortal creature but Brahm personified. The sexual organs are meant to fulfill some divine mandate and not for indulgence and sexual enjoyments. Refer note no. 3 of verse no. 36 above.

So as soon as this wisdom dawns in his mind, he begins to see his own self as a personification of the Supreme Being capable of generating new forms of life in the form of his offspring almost from scratch, besides creating this colourful and many-faceted world of magnificent charms and sights. He makes new discoveries, new innovations, improves on and adds to what the original creator has created in some earlier time. In other words, he possesses the same 'creative and generating' powers and potentials as possessed by the Supreme Being. This is exactly the main purpose of the great teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads—to kindle self realisation in the man and make him realise that he is not an ordinary mortal like other ordinary creatures in this creation who are destined to lead a life ending in death and rebirth depending on what that creature has done in its previous life, but someone specially privileged and endowed to get an opportunity to charter his own course of redemption and salvation which no other forms can do with the same ease that is available to him.]”

There are other Upanishads that describe the *Naadis and the direction in which they go*, their *destination*, and their *functions* has been detailed in Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 51-60, Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 22-30, and Yoshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 17-27 of the Krishna Yajur Veda; and in the Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Sam Veda, Canto 4, verse nos. 13-22 ½ of the Sam Veda tradition.

Now let us see them one by one.

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 22-30 describe the origin and location of the main fifteen Naadis. To quote—

“Verse no. 22 = The Naadi Chakra (the wheel-like structure where all the Naadis have their central origin) is located in this region. This Chakra is like a circular saw with an edge that has twelve serrations. This Naadi Chakra is said to the center which bears the body, which supports the body. [The reason is that if the nerves fail, the entire body’s normal functioning fails. Such a body is a burden on its own self.]

The Kundalini (the coiled subtle energy center of the body) is also located here (22).

“Verse no. 23 = [The various important Naadis are being narrated now. These Naadis have been described in other Upanishads also, e.g. Yoshikha Upanishad, Jabal Darshan and Yogchudamani.]

The Sushumna Naadi covers the opening of the Brahm Randhra. (This is a slit-like opening from where the subtle energy of the body enters the spinal cord and moves upwards.] The other two Naadis that accompany Sushumna Naadis are called Alambusa and Kuhu (23).

“Verse no. 24 = Beyond this Anant (Sushumna) Naadi are present the pair of Naadis called Varuna and Yashaswani. To the right of this Anant (Sushumna) Naadi is present the Pingla Naadi (24).

“Verse no. 25 = Beyond it (Pingla) are present the two Naadis called Pusha and Payaswani. Behind the Sushumna is located the Saraswati Naadi (25).

“Verse no. 26 = Beyond it (Saraswati) are located the two Naadis called Shankhini and Gandhari. To the left of the Sushumna Naadi is located the Ida Naadi (26).

“Verse no. 27 = Beyond it (Ida) are located the Hastijivaha and Vishwodari Naadis. These Naadis are present in a circle like the spokes of a wheel (27).

“Verse no. 28 = These twelve Naadis bear the twelve vital winds¹. [That is, the twelve vital life-sustaining airs of the body move through these channels of the body to support the entire body and give it its conscious sensation of life and vitality.]

These Naadis are of different colours² just like tubes are wrapped by coverings of varying colours to distinguish one from the other. [The colours are probably due to the presence of one dominant wind flowing thorough a particular Naadi. It is like having a complex electric gadget with wires of different colours to mark one from the other so that there is no confusion between any two of them.] (28).

[Note—¹The vital winds are the following—According to Subalo-panishad, Canto 9, verse no.1-14 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, there are fourteen vital winds present in the body. It lists their functions as follows—(1) Pran—this controls eyes and the faculty of sight (verse 1); (2) Apaana—this controls ears and the faculty of hearing (verse 2); (3) Vyan—this controls nose and the faculty of smell (verse 3); (4) Udaan—this controls the tongue and the faculty of taste (verse 4); (5) Samaana—this controls the skin and the faculty of touch (verse 5); (6) Vairambh—this controls speech (verse 6); (7) Mukhya—this controls the hands (verse 7); (8) Antarayam—this controls the legs (verse 8); (9) Prabhanjan—this controls the anus (verse 9); (10) Kurma—this controls the genitals (verse 10); (11) Shyen—this controls the Mana or the thoughts and emotions (verse 11); (12) Krishna—this controls the discrimination, intellect and wisdom (verse 12); (13) Shwet—this controls Ahankar or the notion of ego, pride, arrogance, vanity etc. (verse 13); (14) Naag—this controls the ‘Chitta’ or the faculty of concentration, memory, sub-conscious, reasoning (verse 14).

According to other Upanishads such as Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 77-87 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, there are ten Prans, viz. Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Udaan, Vyan, Nag, Kurma, Krikar, Devdutta and Dhananjay. So, it is hard to say which two Prans has this present Upanishad of ours has avoided in the absence of any specific names. Perhaps the remaining two winds flow thorough the two Naadis mentioned below in verse no. 29.

²Colour of the vital winds—The Dhyānbindu Upanishad, verse nos. 95-99 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition not only describes the ‘colours’ of the five principle winds but also their ‘Beej Mantras’.]

“Verse no. 29 = In the area of the navel, there is whirling subtle energy center called the ‘Nabhi Chakra’. [Nabhi = navel; Chakra = wheel.] The two glorious Naadis called the Naad-dhara and the Jwalanti are located here.

The Naad-dhara is kept active because of the cosmic vibration called Naad resonating through it. The Jwalanti, as the name suggests, is radiant and splendorous

with the cosmic energy flowing through it. [It is believed that this Nabhi Chakra is a symbolic center of the cosmic Sun in the body, and its energy flows through this Naadi.] (29).

“Verse no. 30 = The other two glorious Naadis present here are Para-randhra and Sushumna. All these four Naadis (Naad-dhara, Jwalanti, Para-randhra and Sushumna) are radiant and glorious like gems. All of them are blocked at their lower end by the mouth of the Kundalini (30).”

The *Yoshikha Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 17-27 has to say on the subject—

“Verse no. 17 = Situated on the Mooladhar triangle is the Sushumna Naadi (tubular duct) measuring about twelve fingers width in length. It is also called ‘Brahm Naadi’. [This is because it links the Kundalini directly to the Brahm Randhra at the top of the head and it is through it that the Pran Vayu, the vital winds, rises from the base of the body to lift and finally escape through the Brahm Randhra to provide liberation and deliverance to the ascetic who practices Yoga. The cosmic Naad representing the presence of Brahm is also heard when the vital Pran wind moves up in it. In other words, this Sushumna Naadi helps an ascetic to become Brahm realised, and hence the name.]

It is believed that it is like a bamboo which has been split into two at its base (17).

“Verse no. 18 = On both the side of it are the two Naadis called Ida and Pingla which go up to the nostrils (18).

“Verse no. 19 = The Naadi on the left of Sushumna is Ida, and the vital wind that moves in it has a golden (Hem) hue or shade (i.e. it is of a yellowish tinge)¹.

To the right of Sushumna is the Pingla Naadi which represents the Sun God. [That is, the vital wind that blows through it has the vitality and energy that is equivalent to that of the sun.]² (19).

[Note—¹According to Dhyandindu Upanishad, verse nos. 95 of the Krishna Yajur Veda, the vital wind which has this colour is the Apaana wind. To quote—”The Beej or seed letter of the Apaana wind (the primary air which moves downwards in the body and helps in food intake and its movement through the intestines, its digestion and elimination from the body) is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Ra’. It has the hue of golden yellow resembling the brilliant sun, and represents the fire element.”

²By saying that the vital wind passing through the Pingla represents the sun and the fact that the sun is like a hot piece of gold and yellow in colour, it is implied that both the Naadis are equally important and carry the vital life forces in them. This is a very obvious observation because one breathes through both the nostrils and both are equally important for the normal health of the man. Even if one of the nostrils is clogged as during severe colds, notwithstanding which, the body feels suffocated. Further, during the process of Pranayam or breath control exercise, the inhalation and exhalation of air, called Purak and Rechak respectively, are done alternately through the left nostril and right nostril, i.e. through the Ida and Pingla Naadis respectively.]

“Verse no. 20 = In the navel region there is a Naadi called Vilambini. It is from here (navel) that all the Naadis originate—both the ones that go upwards and the ones that go downwards in the body (20).

“Verse no. 21 = This clutch of Naadis in the region of the navel is called the Naadi Chakra, and it is like the egg of a hen.

The two Naadis called Gandhari and Hast-Jivaha originate from it and go up to the two eyes (thereby controlling the function of seeing) (21).

“Verse no. 22 = The two Naadis called Pusha and Alambusa originate from there and go up to the two ears (thereby controlling the function of hearing).

The great Naadi called Shura rises from here and goes up to the center of the two eyebrows. [Hence, this Naadi helps in concentration of attention and focusing of the mind, especially during meditation. It also helps the ascetic in self realisation when it is said that the third eye of wisdom located in this spot is opened.] (22).

“Verse no. 23 = The Vishwodara Naadi is also located there, and it helps to take in all the four types of foods¹ (by creating a taste for them and helping in their digestion). [That is, this Naadi controls the entire function of digestion and taste.]

The Naadi called Saraswati rises from here (Naadi Chakra) and goes up to the tongue (thereby controlling the function of speaking) (23).

“Verse no. 24 = The Naadi called Raka also has its seat here (Nabhi Chakra). It creates the strength to drink. [Hence, it controls the function of thirst and the ability to drink and hold this drink inside the body without immediately vomiting it out.]

Besides this function, it creates hunger and clears mucous from the nostrils. [Therefore, it has a direct role to play in colds and catarrhs.] (24).

“Verse no. 25 = The Naadi called Shankhini originates here (Nabhi Chakra) and goes up to the throat and faces downwards there, pointing to the place of its origin (navel). It helps to take the nutrients of the food eaten to the mind (brain). [Hence, it provides nourishment to the brain and controls its proper health and functioning.] (25).

“Verse no. 26 = There are three Naadis that go downwards from the navel. Out of them, the Naadi named Kuhu helps in elimination of stool and the one named Vaaruni helps in passage of urine (26).

“Verse no. 27 = The Naadi named Chitra goes up to the Siwani (the suture between the male genital and the anus) and controls the discharge of sperms (semen). [Therefore, it controls sexual behaviour, male potency and virility.]

I have described the Naadi Chakra (the network of Naadis) to you (27).”

The *Jabal Darshan Upanishad* of Sam Veda, in its Canto 4, verse nos. 13-22 ½ describes the main Naadis and their distribution. To quote—

“Verse no. 13-16 = [The location of the chief nerves is described in the following verses—] Oh sage! It (Kundalini) blocks the mouth of the ‘Brahma Randhra’ (located at the base of the spine) with its own tip. To the left of the ‘Sushumna’ is the ‘Eda’ nerve, and to the right is the ‘Pingla’ nerve (13). The ‘Saraswati’ and ‘Kuhu’ nerves

are located on either side, slightly on the back of the ‘Sushumna’ nerve. At the back of the ‘Eda’ nerve is situated the ‘Gandhari’ nerve, and on its front side is present the ‘Hastijihvaha’ nerve (14). At the back of the ‘Pingla’ nerve is located the ‘Pusa’ nerve, and to its front is present the ‘Yashaswini’ nerve. In between the ‘Kuhu’ and the ‘Hastijihvaha’ nerves is located the ‘Vishwodari’ nerve (15). The ‘Varuna’ nerve is located in between the Yashaswini and the ‘Kuhu’ nerves. The ‘Payaswini’ nerve is situated between the ‘Pusa’ and the ‘Saraswati’ nerves (16) [13-16].

“Verse no. 17-20 = The ‘Shankhini’ nerve is located between the ‘Gandhari’ and the ‘Saraswati’ nerves. The ‘Alambusa’ nerve passes through the center of the ‘Nabhi Kanda’ and goes up to the anus (17). The ‘Sushumna’ nerve is also called ‘Raka’. To the east of it is the ‘Kuhu’ nerve. It is present both in the lower part as well as the upper part of the body, and it extends right up to the right nostril (18). The ‘Eda’ nerve goes right upto the left nostril. The ‘Yashaswini’ nerve extends up to the big toe of the left foot (19). The ‘Pusa’ nerve goes up behind the ‘Pingla’ nerve and reaches up to turn towards the left eye, while the ‘Payaswini’ nerve has been said to go right up to right ear (20) [17-20].

“Verse no. 21-22 = Oh sage! The ‘Saraswati’ nerve extends upwards till the tongue; the ‘Hastijihvaha’ nerve extends down up to the big toe of the left foot (21). The nerve named ‘Shankhini’ has spread up to the left ear. Experts in Vedanta say that the ‘Gandhari’ nerve goes up to the left eye (22) [21-22].

[Note—Careful reading of verse nos. 13-22 shows that (a) ‘Alambusa’ is the only nerve which passes down from the tip of the ‘Kanda’ located in the area of the navel, through its central core, up to the anus, while verse no. 23 (below) tells us that Vishwodara also passes through the center of Kanda. (b) The rest of the 13 nerves out of the total 14 pass through the spinal cord right up to the upper organs of the body—the nose, the ears, the eyes and the head, as well as to the lower part—the toes and the sole of the foot.]

“Verse no. 22 ½ = The ‘Vishwodara’ nerve lies in the center of the ‘Nabhi Kanda’.”

(J) The patron Gods of the different Naadis—

The patron gods of the Naadis, i.e. the forces of Nature personified as deities who control the functioning of the Naadis, are enumerated in Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 35-40. To quote—

“Verse no. 35-36 = Oh Sage! Shiva is the patron God of the ‘Sushumna’ nerve while Vishnu is of ‘Eda’ and Brahma of ‘Pingla’ nerves. ‘Viraat’ (the macrocosmic form of Brahma) is the patron God of Saraswati (35). The ‘Pusa’ nerve has ‘Aditya’ (the Sun-God) bearing the same name (i.e., the sun is also called ‘Pusa’), the ‘Varuna’ nerve has ‘Vayu God’ (i.e., the Wind-God) as its patron, while the ‘Hastijihvaha’ nerve has ‘Varuna’ (Water-God) as its patron God (36) [35-36].

“Verse no. 37-38 = Oh the best amongst sages! The Sun-God is the patron deity for the ‘Yashaswini’ nerve, while the ‘Alambusa’ nerve has ‘Varun’ (the Water-God) as

its patron God (37). The 'Kuhu' nerve has 'hunger' as its patron Goddess, and the moon is the patron God of both the 'Gandhari' and the 'Shankhini' nerves. 'Prajapati' is the patron God of the 'Payaswini' nerve (38) [37-38].

“Verse no. 39-40 = The Fire-God is the patron God for the 'Vishwodar' nerve. Oh great sage! The Moon-God always moves through and pervades throughout in the 'Eda' nerve (39), while the Sun-God does so in the 'Pingla' nerve (40).

(K) The Kundalini theory

The Kundalini is a coiled subtle cosmic energy center of the body that lies at the lower end of the spinal cord, blocking it with one of its ends. The subtle energy of the Kundalini represents the dynamism of the consciousness present in the body of the living being. By doing Yogic practices, the stupendous energy trapped in its coils can be released by the unplugging of its mouth which opens into the 'Sushumna' nerve. This energy then rises up the spinal cord and ultimately reaches the top of the head. The Yogi who practices this Kundalini activation, called 'Kundalini Jagran', experiences brilliance and dazzle unmatched by any other experience. Since it requires a lot of willful effort and energy to make this happen, and an activated Kundalini helps the spiritual aspirant achieve success in his meditation and contemplation on the one hand and providing sufficient energy to his Pran or vital life forces present inside the body to enable the pure consciousness known as the Atma to experience extreme bliss and ecstasy that comes with 'self-realisation', the process is called 'Shakti Chaalan'—or activation of the hidden energy of the body for the aspirant's spiritual upliftment.

According to this theory, the energy centre of a man is in the shape of a coil having three and a half loops, called Kundalini, located at the base of the spine. Each full round of the coil represents one Guna—i.e. one coil stands for the Sata Guna or purity, one coil for the Raja Guna or passions, and one coil for Tama Guna or inertia. The half coil stands for the modification of Prakriti or Nature. Every person has this Kundalini lying in a dormant state. When this energy centre is awakened, the man is able to experience total fulfillment and attain oneness with divinity. This energy centre can be activated by incessant Japa and Meditation.

There are three dimensions of space— the physical space 'Mahakasha' (the plane where the planets and stars exist), the mind-intellect space called the 'Chittakash' (the plane where the creature thinks and imagines) and the knowledge space called 'Chidakash' (where the supreme and infinite knowledge resides; it is the pure consciousness that stage here). The word 'Akash' means space, limitless, boundless sky whereas 'Maha' means great, 'Chitta' means mind, and 'Chidda' means eternal enlightenment which is pure consciousness.

The Kundalini theory of Yoga states that there are three very narrow channels running through the backbone (spine) from bottom to head. The left channel is called 'Ida', the right channel is called 'Pingla' and the central channel is called 'Shushumna'. When we are physically and

mentally active, our energy passes through 'Pingala' channel and the breath passes strongly through right nostril. When the body and the mind are resting, the energy passes through 'Ida' channel and the breath through the left nostril. The 3rd channel, the 'Shusumna', is usually closed at its lower end. It can be made to open through intense spiritual practices such as Japa and meditation. When opened, the energy of the Kundalini passes (ascends) through the 'Shusumna' channel and rises up towards the brain. When this happens, the aspirant gets access to the knowledge space (Chiddakash). Ultimately, when this energy reaches the highest point in the channel, a point called 'Sahasrara Chakra', the man is able to experience bliss and ecstasy associated with the ultimate experience of the truth called Brahma. This is 'God or Brahma realisation' in terms of Yoga. But the vehicle to do this is Japa of the divine Mantra and meditation with the help of deep contemplation.

The 'Fire' required to heat and activates the 'Apan wind' and push it upwards comes from the 'Sun Chakra' located between the navel and heart. It is done by 'Surya Pranayam'. During this meditative process, it is imagined that flames are flaring up from the sun residing in the region of the navel, and these flames are heating the 'Sushumna' nerve, also called the 'Brahma's door', the lungs, the heart, the throat etc., all of which have the vital airs in them. By heating the lower end of the 'Sushumna' nerve alongside the heating of the 'Kundalini' and the 'Apan wind', the opening of this nerve is unclogged and the subtle energy trapped inside the coiled 'Kundalini' is released and pushed up by the 'Apan wind' into the spinal cord, rising right up to the head, mixing with all other winds en-route, collecting all their impurities with it much like the hot air rising above the chimney of a furnace in a factory. It is also like the hot wind rising up from the surface of the earth and developing into a whirl-wind which takes along with it dust particles, leaves, twigs et al. This polluted wind is finally exhaled through the right nostril.

Further, as is the case of a chimney in a factory, the rising of hot air also helps in ventilation of the body because fresh air is drawn in to fill the gap left by the rising Apan wind. In other words, all the vital winds present at different points in the body of the individual, which were hitherto trapped due to bad habits and postures through the person's lifetime, are forced out of their entrapments and are circulated throughout the body. Obviously, the diseases caused by incarcerated and trapped polluted wind —called 'Vayu Dosh', or affections of the body arising out of faulty winds —are eliminated (Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, 2/113).

The rising of the 'Kundalini' is also similar to the rising of mercury in a thermometer. When the bulb is heated, the mercury shoots up. The 'Kundalini activation' is described in all the major Upanishads dealing with Yoga, chiefly the following— (a) Yog Chudamani and Jabal Darshan Upanishads of the Sam Veda tradition, (b) Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Dyan Bindu Upanishd, verse no. 66-69, Yog Kundalini (which is specially dedicated to the concept of Kundalini and how to activate it), and Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 85-117 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. (c) Shandilya Upanishad of the

Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 8, 36/1-4; Canto 1, section 7, verse nos. 36/2-5

The *Dyanbindu Upanishad*, verse no. 66-69 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition describes how to activate and ignite the latent cosmic energy present in the Kundalini. This verse is quoted here—

“Verse no. 66 = The supreme source of divine cosmic energy is personified as a female deity (a Goddess) called the ‘Parmeshwari’. [Here the term refers to the Kundalini¹ because it is the fount of this cosmic dynamic energy in creation inside the body.] This Parmeshwari representing the stupendous source of energy lies in a sleeping state or in a dormant state of existence, blocking the entrance or doorway to the pathway to Brahm realisation (called the ‘Brahm-Dwar’)².

This Parmeshwari is aroused or literally woken up from her sleep by the process of ‘Vahini Yoga’³ or the meditative practice that is tantamount to doing a fire sacrifice in a symbolic way⁴ because it kindles the latent fire element inside the Kundalini. This process is aided by the strong will power of the mind called the Mana, and the proper channelising of the forces of the vital winds called the Maruts present inside the body by doing Pranayam and other exercises of Yoga (66).

[Note—¹Kundalini—The Kundalini is a coil-like center of subtle energy lying at the base of the spine. It is generally lying in a dormant state. By doing Yogic practices, the stupendous energy trapped in its coils can be released by the unplugging of its mouth which opens into the ‘Sushumna’ nerve. This energy then rises up the spinal cord and ultimately reaches the top of the head. The Yogi who practices this Kundalini activation, called ‘Kundalini Jagran’, experiences brilliance and dazzle unmatched by any other experience.

²The Brahm-Dwar is the lower end of the Sushumna Naadi, the tubular duct running through the center of the spine and is regarded as the only duct that helps the expert ascetic to divert his vital winds upwards along with the subtle cosmic energy released from the Kundalini, upwards so that they reach the top of the head where the Brahm-Randhra is located. This Brahm-Randhra is the hair-like slit on the top of the skull from where the supreme transcendental Brahm is said to have entered the gross body of the creature at the time of creation and had taken up his abode in the creature’s mind and intellect in order to control his creation at the gross level and material plane of physical existence from there. According to the philosophy of Yoga, when an acclaimed practitioner of meditation and contemplation is able to concentrate his vital forces of life, i.e. the Pran and Atma, there, he experiences a closeness with this Supreme Being present in a subtle and imperceptible form at this spot. Finally, at the time of death, his Pran makes its exit, along with the Atma, his pure self or consciousness, from this point to merge with the wind or air element present in the vast cosmos outside the physical body. This is tantamount to the aspirant’s final liberation and deliverance because then this Pran would not have to reenter any other body as it has merged and got itself lost permanently in the elements of Nature, losing its individuality.

Usually the lower end of this Brahm-Dwar (represented by the Sushumna Naadi) is blocked by the mouth of the Kundalini. The thrust of Yoga practice, especially the Vahini Yoga is to un-block it by opening the Kundalini’s mouth and releasing the latter’s cosmic energy into this pathway.

Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 36 of Sam Veda tradition describes this pathway.

³Vahini Yoga—It deals with the activation of the vital wind/air with the fire/energy of life. For it, various techniques, processes, postures and exercises have been prescribed in Yoga, the chief among them being the activation of the Kundalini by Pranayam. The ‘fire’ required to heat and activates the ‘Apan’ wind and push it upwards comes from the ‘Sun Chakra’ or the ‘Surya Chakra’ (subtle energy center) located in the region of the navel. It is done by ‘Surya Pranayam’. During this meditative practice, it is imagined that leaping flames are flaring up from the core of the sun symbolically residing in the navel of the Yogi, and these flames are virtually heating the Sushumna nerve (also called the pathway leading to Brahm) as well as the other vital winds present in the lungs, the heart, throat etc. By heating the lower end of the Sushumna nerve, which is akin to heating one end of a heating rod or coil, alongside the heating of the Kundalini and the Apan wind, the opening of this Sushumna nerve, which was up till now blocked, is unclogged and the subtle energy of the coiled Kundalini, which was hereto before trapped inside it, is released and pushed up by the Apan wind into the spinal cord through this Sushumna nerve where it rises up through this channel right up to the mind or the top of the head, mixing with it all other winds en-route, collecting all their impurities with it, much like the hot air above the surface of the earth developing into whirlwind and rising up into the atmosphere, taking up along with it the dust particles, dry leaves, twigs etc. as it goes up. This polluted wind is finally exhaled through the right and left nostrils during the process of Rechak. The rising of the Kundalini is similar to the rising of heated mercury in a thermometer. When the bulb is heated, the mercury shoots up. Here, when the Kundalini is heated, the energy trapped inside it rises up the Sushumna nerve.

Vahini Yoga is so-called because it stokes the latent fire energy lying dormant hitherto in the body of the spiritual aspirant by activating the vital winds, especially the warm Apan wind present in the lower end of the intestines, and utilizing its powerful force to stoke and activate the Kundalini, thereby heating it and releasing its subtle energy through the opening of its mouth covering the lower end of the Sushumna Naadi (nerve). This released energy then snakes up this Naadi and reaches the head, first at the root of the nose and center of the eyebrows and ultimately the top of the head at the point of the Brahm Randhra, the hair like slit on the skull, from which is finally escapes at the time of death of the ascetic, giving him liberation from the fetter of this body for ever.

(Refer Yogchudamanu Upanishad, verse no. 38 and 107 of Sam Veda tradition.)

⁴The Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 36-39 of Sam Veda tradition has an identical view which says—

“Verse no. 36—The ‘Kundalini energy’ is located above/at the top of the ‘Kanda’ in the form of a coil having eight spirals. It covers the mouth of ‘Brahm-Dwar’ (literally, the doorway leading to Brahm). It remains ever present, but dormant, in that place.

“Verse no. 37—The stupendously supreme, Goddess-like divine and sublime cosmic energy (i.e. Kundalini) remains dormant and in a sleeping state. It keeps the door or the entrance point of the channel leading to Brahm residing

in the 'Mana' of a creature (the Brahm which lives in the realms of the mind and the intellect, the heart and the soul of the creature) blocked or closed or choked by its own mouth. This entrance point is called 'Brahma's doorway', which is actually the opening of the 'Sushumna' nerve. [The coil of Kundalini is like a serpent, with its hood blocking the lower end of the spinal cord like a plug in the neck of a bottle.]

"Verse no. 38—By the practice of 'Vahini Yoga' (literally, the 'fire Yoga') it becomes activated. Simply put, the 'fuse' is ignited by the subtle fire produced or kindled or stoked by Yoga to make this energy active and viable. Once activated, it assumes the form of 'light', and accompanied by (or pushed by or impelled by) a determined mind as well as the forceful push of the vital winds, it gradually snakes up or rises up the 'Sushumna' nerve (like a flexible needle snaking up the intestine or veins during a micro-hole surgery as done during endoscopy by a doctor).

"Verse no. 39—Even as a person can open the locks of the door to his house with a key, Yogis can open the door to liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation by the use of this Kundalini.

To understand the phenomenon, one can imagine a flexible probe or scope passing up one's rectum during a medical process called endoscopy. The rectum and the lower intestine have a titillating experience as a result of the probe moving inside it. The entire process has been elaborately described in a note to verse no. 107 of this Upanishad.]

"Verse no. 67-68 = Upon being woken up, this Parmeshwari (i.e. the cosmic dynamic energy trapped in the Kundalini but now released in its subtle and sublime form) rises up and moves upwards the Sushumna path (i.e. this energy snakes up the Naadi called Sushumna), taking along with her the Mana (subtle mind) and the Pran (the vital wind forces in the body representing the spark of life and vitality that makes the creature move about and show signs of life) just like the needle takes the thread passing through it upwards when it is moved in that direction by the hand while sewing a cloth.

Wise, erudite and expert ascetics diligently and forcefully open the door leading to their liberation and deliverance from the fetters that shackle them to this body by releasing the trapped energy of the Kundalini just like a man opens a magical trapdoor of some mysterious citadel by clapping or knocking at it to summon the person inside the citadel to open the door for him¹ (67-68).

[Note—¹True form of liberation and deliverance for an enlightened ascetic implies the release of the 'Pran', i.e. the vital winds present in the body which are synonymous with 'life' in a creature, from the trap-like physical gross body upon its exit from the latter, and its merger with the primary air or wind element that is present outside the body, followed by the disintegration of the body and release of the other elements such as earth, water, fire and sky, which were an integral constituent parts of the gross body, into their primary cosmic forms. This ensures that there would be no more vestiges of the earlier body left, and the dissolution is complete and final. Refer Yog Kundali Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

"Verse no. 69 = The person desirous of activating the Kundalini and releasing its subtle energy for his spiritual benefit as well as to empower him with great mystical

and occult powers should sit steadily in the Padmasan posture¹. The palms of the two hands are placed one on the top of the other, face upwards and put on the heels of the two legs (which have already been folded in from the knee joint in such a way that the heels are just opposite the navel, the sole is pointed upwards and inwards towards the body, and the toes of the leg of left side rest on the thigh of the right side and of the right leg on the thigh of the left side). The chin is drawn in and held tightly near the pit of the throat below the Adam's apple.

While sitting in this posture, the practitioner should focus his mind on the patron deity of ascetics, usually on Lord Shiva who is regarded as the supreme Brahm manifested in the form of the 'pure self'. The Apaana Vayu (i.e. the wind in the lower part of the body, especially in the lower intestines and pelvic region) is drawn or pulled upwards, while at the same time the Prana Vayu (i.e. the breath moving in the upper part of the body, especially in the nostrils and lungs) is made to divert inwards or held from escaping. [This physical exercise is very difficult and requires a lot of practice and patience. It results in mixing these two primary winds in the body. This is effectuated when the Apaana wind is pulled up by the upwards tug of the Prana wind, and the latter is pushed down by the downwards pull of the former, resulting in a balancing effect.]

The net result of this exercise is that the practitioner is able to experience the astounding potentials of the released powers of the trapped subtle cosmic energy that was hitherto lying dormant in a hibernating state in the Kundalini. [When the two winds cross each other's path, they create enough force that shakes and rattles the Kundalini into activity, thereby unplugging its mouth to release the energy trapped inside its coils. This is like doing physical exercises in a gymnasium to loosen rigid muscles and tone them up.] (69).

[Note—¹The Padmasan posture is to sit in a lotus posture. This entails to sit crossed-legged in such a way that the foot of the left leg rests at the base of the thigh of the right side and the heel is just in front of the navel. Similarly, the right leg is drawn in and the foot is placed at the base of the thigh of the left leg and the heel is in front of the navel. The toes of each leg rest upon the thigh of the other side and the sole points upwards. The spine, neck and head are held in a ram-rod straight position, and the hands, with palms facing upwards and resting one on the top of the other, are placed on the folded legs in front of the navel region. The chin is drawn in and held tightly near the base of the Adam's apple near the chest. This Asana has been described in Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 39 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition.]”

An entire Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, viz. the *Yog Kundalini Upanishad*, which is the 27th Upanishad of this Veda is exclusively dedicated to the concept of the Kundalini and the detailed process of its activation along with the spiritual benefits derived by this awakening.

Besides the above, there are two more Upanishads of this Veda that deal with this concept of the Kundalini--viz. the *Yogshikha Upanishad* Canto 1, verse nos. 82-89; *Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse nos. 81-84.

Now let us see what the *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 82-89 has to say on the subject—

“Verse no. 82 = By carefully learning the process of activating the vital energies trapped inside the body from the wise and erudite Guru (teacher of Yoga), the aspirant should forcefully make relevant efforts to control the vital winds.

The Kundalini is a coiled subtle energy center having three and a half loops in the coil. It becomes straightened as a result of the process mentioned here (by which the vital winds are controlled and the latent energies are activated). [This process releases the trapped energy in the Kundalini.] (82).

“Verse no. 83 = The anus should be constricted (so that the Apan wind does not escape through it during the pressure to be exerted for activating and straightening of the Kundalini) and the Kundalini should be jerked so that it is activated into life¹.

If the aspirant is successful in doing so, i.e. if he is able to activate the Kundalini and harness its stupendous treasury of cosmic energy that lies latent in it in a dormant form, he is able to symbolically conquer death; he would have no fear from death. [This is because for one, he would have all his organs under his control, his body would be very healthy and toned up, he would not have to suffer from numerous ailments that afflict the body and which cause insurmountable torments for an ordinary man, and should he decide to finally discard the body and free himself from its limitations he would easily channelise all his vital winds up through the Sushumna Naadi with the aid of energy provided by the Kundalini and make his painless exit by rupturing the Brahm Randhra at the top of the head. He would not have to suffer the normal horrors of a declining body and the final moments of death.] (83).

[Note—¹This phenomenon is like uncoiling a hose pipe full of very cold water during winters. The water and the pipe have been lying under frigid conditions for a long time and the pipe needs some amount of warming and vigorous shaking to uncoil it and releasing its water content. In the present case, the Kundalini is the subtle energy center or the body placed at the lower end of the spine. Its mouth is closed by the Sushumna Naadi. The Kundalini is compared to a serpent whose mouth is shut by this Naadi. When the serpent is shaken and jerked into life, the hot breath of it would melt the clogging wax in its mouth and release the venomous gases trapped in this snake’s elongated body. When the anus is shut tight, the heat in the lower bowls and abdomen create sufficient energy that would unclog the Kundalini and melt the wax sealing its mouth, thereby releasing its hitherto trapped energy which would then snake up the only opening available to it, i.e. the tubular Sushumna Naadi. This released energy snakes up through this Naadi and reaches the other end of it at the top of the head (skull) in the area of the Brahm Randhra (the cranium).

The process of activating the Kundalini has been elaborately described in the book ‘The Serpent Power’ by Arthur Avalon & Sir John Woodroffe.

According to the *Yogchudamani Upanishad*, verse no. 36 of Sam Veda tradition, the energy of the Kundalini is located above/at the top of the ‘Kanda’ in the form of a coil having eight spirals. It covers the mouth of ‘Brahma Dwar’ (literally, the doorway leading to Brahma). It remains ever present, but dormant, in that place.

The *Dyanbindu Upanishad*, verse no. 69 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition describes how to activate and ignite the latent cosmic energy present in the Kundalini.

The benefits of activating the Kundalini and the process do so have been succinctly described in Krishna Yajur Veda's *Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse nos. 81-84.]

“Verse no. 84 = This is very esoteric and secret knowledge that I have divulged to you in brief. One should sit in the Vajra Aasan¹ and constrict the upper part of the body. [That is, he should control the Pran or breath from escaping like the Apaana wind was restricted by closing the anus in verse no. 83 above.] (84).

[Note—¹The Vajra Aasan is the following—the body is curved or arched backwards like a bow in such a way that the head touches the upturned soles of the feet. To give effect to this Aasan, one should sit on the ground with the two legs bent backwards from the knee and the soles pointing upwards behind the buttocks. The upper part of the body is slowly bent backwards until the rear of the head touches the upturned soles from behind. This posture is called Vajra after the weapon of the same name held by Indra, the king of Gods, which gives him invincibility in the entire creation. In other words, the practitioner of Vajra Aasan too acquires such great powers that he too becomes invincible.]

“Verse no. 85 = The fire needs air to remain kindled, and that is why when one is able to control and harness the vital winds and concentrate their energy on the Kundalini, the subtle energy present in the latter remains perpetually active; it is not allowed to subside and get doused; it is not allowed to flicker and die away.

The Kundalini has immense energy inside it. The intensity of it is so powerful that it can effectively conquer all the three worlds¹ (85).

[Note—¹Here the term conquering of the three worlds have two connotations—(a) The three states in which the consciousness exists—i.e. the waking state called the Jagrat, the dreaming state called the Swapna, and deep sleep state called the Sushupta. This happens for the following reasons. (i) By controlling his sense organs during the waking state of consciousness, he has literally vanquished the material world which is the focus of attention of these organs; this world no longer disturbs him. (ii) Next, since he has controlled the mind and its sub-conscious, he remains free from their influence during the dreaming state. Since the dreams are the result of the sub-conscious mind at work and the latter has already been conquered, there is no question of his mind creating a world of dreams which he would not like to exist, or which is not according to his temperament. The mind would not dream dreams that the ascetic would not like to dream of. In other words, he has controlled the wayward mind and through it his dreams, because dreams are the playfield of the mind and the sub-conscious. (iii) When he has been able to conquer the first two states and crossed into the third state of consciousness, called the deep sleep state, both the gross body and the subtle mind are non-existent; they have no role to play now. But under ordinary circumstances, this state is very temporary for the man in a deep sleep state reverts back to the earlier two stages when the time comes for him to wake up to the realities of this material world where he lives. When it happens, the temporary bliss that he had obtained during the deep sleep state vanishes in thin air. But in the case of a realised and expert ascetic this does not happen for he remains perpetually in a

state of bliss and oblivion, unconcerned with this artificial world of material objects driven by the mind and the intellect. In other words, he has crossed this third state by conquering it to proceed to the fourth state called Turiya, a state of perpetual bliss and happiness.

This is a metaphoric way of saying that an ascetic who is able to harness the energy of the Kunkalini by practicing Yoga has conquered the three worlds by not only controlling himself in his waking state by self restraint of his sense organs, but also controlling his world of dreams by controlling the sub-conscious mind, and then the higher existential state of consciousness called deep sleep. That is, he is in total control of his self and is like an emperor who is invincible for his enemies, the latter being the uncountable worldly detractions and inherent faults of character created by various Gunas that tend to mar his spiritual progress.

(b) The other interpretation of the term ‘three worlds’ refer to the stupendous mystical powers called the Siddhis (of which there are eight in number) that he gets by being successful in Yoga. Armed with these Siddhis, he can perform super-human tasks and achieve success in doing things that a normal emperor’s army is unable to do. He can go anywhere he likes in the three worlds consisting of the terrestrial world where humans live, the nether world where subterranean creatures live, and the celestial world of Gods and Spirits. He can assume any form there, defeat even the strongest of enemies and the fiercest of animals, and even defeat death itself which is otherwise undefeatable. (Refer Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 51, 73-75, 59-60 in this context which explicitly state this fact.)]

“Verse no. 86 = When the subtle energy of the Kundalini is stoked by the concentrated vital winds present inside the body (by doing various Aasans and as described in verse nos. 82-84), it rises up and snakes up the Sushumna Naadi. [This Naadi is the tubular duct whose lower end opens into the mouth of the Kundalini. So when the mouth is unclogged by heating the Kundalini by Apan wind, the energy thus released naturally would enter this tubular duct.]

It is metaphorically said that it has entered the Chandra Mandal, i.e. the realm of the moon because the entrance of the vital winds and the energy into the Sushumna Naadi causes a sense of titillation and ecstasy for the ascetic. Such emotional feelings as ecstasy, exhilaration, elation and joyousness are associated with the Moon God.

It is said that now it pierces through the Brahm Granthi¹ (86).

[Note—¹The word ‘Granthi’ means a knot. Just like a knot binds something, the Granthis of the body bind the subtle energy present in the body from being released. According to Tantra literature, there are three Granthis—viz. Brahm Granthi, Vishnu Granthi and Rudra Granthi. They obstruct the upwards movement of the energy or power of the Kundalini. Each of the six Chakras (whirling energy centers of the body) has two Granthis on either side. The Brahm Granthi is situated between the Muladhar Chakra and Swadisthan Chakra.]

“Verse no. 87 = Then the energy of the Kundalini pierces through the Vishnu Granthi¹ and establishes itself in the Rudra Granthi². At this stage, the aspirant should practice the Kumbhak phase of Pranayam³ repeatedly and replenish the strength of the vital winds present inside the body. [This is made possible because the inhaled air

which is rich in oxygen is first sucked in through the nostrils during the Purak phase of Pranayam. It is then allowed to stay inside the body for some time during the Khumbhak phase of Pranayam to enable it to oxidise all the tissues and remote corners of the body besides rejuvenating the vital winds of the body. The toxic gases which were earlier trapped inside the different parts of the body have been yanked out due to the heating of the body by Pranayam, activating the Kundalini and holding the Apan wind from escaping from the anus by closing the latter. These toxic gases, such as carbon dioxide etc, are then collected and exhaled during the Rechak phase of Pranayam.] (87).

[Note—¹The Vishnu Granthi is situated between Manipur and Ahahat Chakras.

²The Rudra Granthi is located between Vishuddha Chakra and Agya (Gyan) Chakra. The energy or cosmic divine powers of the Kundalini has to pierce through these three knots before it can reach the Sahasraara Chakra at the top of the head.

³The word Pranayam refers to control of the breath and Kumbhak is the phase of Pranayam when the inhaled air is held inside the body for a certain pre-fixed time before being exhaled.]

“Verse no. 88 = The aspirant should then practice the piercing of the ‘Surya Mandal’ or the realm of the subtle sun in the body. By doing this successfully he finds peace, calmness and fulfillment. This is effected by doing the Kumbhak phase of Pranayam four times. [This is a reference to the fact Kumbhak would have resulted in his body becoming light as all the toxic gases are by now eliminated and all the tissues are well oxidised and charged. The body feels rejuvenated and fresh.] (88).

“Verse no. 89 = Having pierced through the three knots (as mentioned in verse no. 86-87) which had been acting as a millstone around his neck, tying him down and preventing the stupendous divine energy of the Kundalini from reaching the Brahm Randhra, the aspirant is now freed from all fetters and becomes eligible to attain Brahm. [That is, now he can enjoy the extreme bliss and happiness which comes with self-realisation and Brahm-realisation.]”

The *Yog Kundalini Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 1, gives a detailed account of how the Kundalini is activated. For example, verse nos. 42-46 describes how the Kundalini is activated by doing Mool Bandha and how it then enters the Sushumna Naadi in a very brief and succinct manner. To quote—

“Verse no. 42 = [This verse describes the Mool Bandha which heats and diverts the Apan wind into the Kundalini.]

Mool Bandha involves the constriction of the anus and diverting upwards forcefully the Apan Vayu¹ which is naturally present in the lower part of the body and which has a natural tendency of moving downwards and out of the anus (42).

[Note—¹The Apan wind is the one that is present in the intestines and moves down and out through the aperture of the anus. It is responsible for movement of the food downwards in the intestines and expulsion of the waste from the body through the anus. When the anus is constricted and shut closed then

when this wind is heated and pressure is exerted on it during the course of Pranayam, it gets would forcefully move upwards. Finding no other opening except the lower end of the spinal cord, or the Sushumna Naadi, it would force its way in it and then snake upwards. This procedure is called Mool Bandha—literally ‘closing of the root’, so named because the Mool Kand, the carrot-like knot of Naadis which form the base or foundation of the body, is located in the region of the anus and the genitals.

The Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 27 of Krishna Yajur Veda describes Mool Bandha as follows—”The ‘Moolbandh’ is closing of that spot in the body which is like the base or foundation for all living beings. It is possible to control the mind and its attention by controlling this Mool or root, which can be done by closing it or doing the Moolbandh. Those who are well versed in the philosophy pertaining to meditation as a tool of Brahm-realisation should be very particular about it (as it helps them to control their mind and its faculties)”.

The word ‘Mool’ means the origin or basis of anything, and ‘bandh’ means to stop or close. The Moolbandh is done by pressing the genitals with the heels and constricting the muscles of the anus to close this opening. Meanwhile, the Apaana Vayu (the wind present in the rectum and anus region) is pulled upwards forcefully. It is described in Dhyānbindu Upanishad, verse no. 73-74^{1/2} of Krishna Yajur Veda, as well as in Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 46 of Sam Veda tradition.]

“Verse nos. 43-45 = [These three verses describe how the Kundalini is activated.]

When this restricted Apaana wind (whose natural movement downwards and out through the anus is restricted by the latter’s closure by doing Mool Bandha) begins its movement upwards, it comes in contact with the fount or the pit of fire (located in the Kundalini and the rest of the sac-like lower abdomen). This hitherto dormant fire is now stoked by this wind/air which begins to swirl around the lower part of the body, thereby rekindling the dormant fire; it begins to burn with renewed vigour and energy [43].

When the Pran (literally ‘the combined life-giving vital wind forces in the body’) is heated and stirred into activity by the combined affect of the fire element present in the body and the diverted Apaana wind¹, it is able to burn all the impurities that have accumulated in the body. [It acts like the blast furnace which burns all things put into it.] [44].

The result of this natural heating process is that the dormant Kundalini is shaken up and stirred into activity much like a sleeping snake being prodded by a heated stick. It then hisses and becomes straightened like that snake [45]. (43-45).

[Note—¹It is to be noted here that this Mool Bandha is done in combination with the Kumbhak phase of Pranayam. When the air is held inside the body during Kumbhak it is natural for it to get heated by the latent heat present inside the body. This is a natural process, especially when Pranayam is done for a prolonged period and the exhalation and inhalation are done rapidly.]

“Verse no. 46 = [This verse describes how the activated energy of the Kundalini enters the Sushumna Naadi.]

When heated, the energy present in the Kundalini now expands and enters the lower end of the Sushumna Naadi (which had hitherto closed the mouth of the

Kundalini by plugging it with its lower end) much like the awakened snake slithering into a cave.

That is why it is ordained upon ascetics that they practice Mool Bandh regularly (46).”

The same idea is repeated in Canto 1, verse nos. 64-66 of the same *Yog Kundalini Upanishad*. To quote—

“Verse no. 64 = The process whereby the anus is closed to divert the Apaana wind upwards is called Mool Bandha. This enables the Apaana wind to get heated and accompanied by the energy of the latent fire energy present in the body it begins to move upwards.”

“Verse nos. 65-66 =When the Pran is also heated it combines with the Apaana to become one ‘activated Pran’. [That is, the artificial distinction between Pran, the breath residing primarily in the upper part of the body, and Apaana, the wind in the intestine and primarily residing in the lower part of the body, is removed when they are heated. Actually air is one and immutable element, and the distinction is made on the basis of their functions and locations. The Pran is located in the upper part of the body and is the term applied to the air moving in and out of the body through the nose and mouth. On the other hand, Apaana is the wind moving down the intestines and out through the anus. When the nose and mouth along with the throat are closed during the Kumbhak phase of Pranayama, especially done with the Jalandhar Bandha, and it is accompanied with the closing of the anus by doing the Mool Bandha, it is natural that the Pran and the Apaana get trapped inside the sac-like abdomen. This not only heats them but enables their mixing. Thus the artificial distinction is removed and the combined duo is known hereafter by a single name of ‘Pran’.]

The accumulated heat (caused by trapping of the winds inside the body and the closing of the mouth, the nose, the throat and the anus) and the agitated winds have exert a combined pressure on the Kundalini, the coiled energy center at the base of the spine, resulting in its uncoiling and getting straightened. It then enters the mouth of the Sushumna Naadi which lies just at one end of the Kundalini. [The Sushumna Naadi emerges from the center of the spinal cord and blocks one end of the Kundalini facing the lower end of the spinal cord. So when the Kundalini is heated, it straightens and subtly wriggles itself into this Sushumna Naadi just like a snake slithering into its hole.]”

The *Shandilya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 8 describes the Kundalini as follows--“The region of the Kundalini lies below the navel and above the groins. The Kundalini has eight coils, and together they represent eight sorts of characteristics or inherent nature exhibited by the Kundalini.

[The Kundalini is a coiled subtle energy centre of the body that lies at the base of the spine, called the Mooladhar Chakra—or the whirling energy center that forms the base of the body. The Kundalini blocks the lower end of the spinal cord by one of its ends. When it is aroused or activated during Yoga, it is heated, and its trapped energy is released into the Sushumna Naadi, the central duct passing through the spinal cord. This energy is also called the Kundalini and it passes through the various Chakras en-route to the top of the head. While doing so, all the Chakras are opened like a bud opening under pressure. When the energy of the Kundalini reaches the top of the head, the practitioner experiences extreme sense of ecstasy, called the exhilaration of self-realisation when he feels extremely blissful and contented. Usually, the energy

would revert back to its original position when the ascetic wakes up from his meditation session, but with sustained practice the Kundalini can be trained to remain perpetually whirling in the top of the head, i.e. in the Shasraar Chakra which is like a wheel having a thousand spokes. { ‘Sahastra = a thousand; Ara = spokes of the wheel; Chakra = wheel. } According to the Tantra philosophy it is like a lotus with a thousand petals. In Yogic parlance, when the Kundalini is stationed in this region of the head, the practitioner of Yoga is said to live in a state of Samadhi—i.e. a state of trance when he experiences bliss and contentedness, and is unaware of anything, including his own body. From practical angle this is because the nerves of the brain are subject to subtle vibrations which have the effect of massaging and titillating them. Refer verse no. 10 below. A separate appendix dealing with Naadis and related concepts describes the Kundalini as well.]

This Kundalini lies in a dormant state at the base of the spine (in the region of the body called the Mooladhar Chakra). During Yoga involving various meditation exercises, the vital winds called the Pran and the fire element present inside the body are systematically controlled and harnessed. This results in the food (nutrients) and water (the fluid components of the body in which the food is dissolved—e.g. the blood, mucous, various enzymes and hormones etc.) present in the body too being regulated properly. The vital winds spread uniformly inside the body, and the fire element is also equally distributed. In other words, the entire internal apparatus of the body is brought under control.

It is then that sufficient energy is generated and the vital wind called the Apaana Vayu (which is present in the lower end of the body to help downward movement of the food in the intestines, its digestion and its final excretion, as well as in the mouth to help imbibe food and water), which is heated by the regulated fire element, enters the Kundalini. This helps to establish a seamless link between the Apaana Vayu that is present in the mouth and the one that is present in the lower end of the body.

The Apaana Vayu rises up along with the Kundalini from the back of the body (because the energy of the Kundalini rises up through the Sushumna Naadi which is present in the spinal cord which itself lies along the backbone) to reach the mouth, and finally goes right up to the top of the head to reach the Brahm-Randhra.

[The Brahm-Randhra is a hair-like slit in the skull on the top of the head. At the height of Yoga, the energy of the Kundalini is thrust out of the body through this slit by the heated and pressurized Apaana Vayu. According to Yoga philosophy, this is how the ascetic leaves his body to find Mukti or liberation and deliverance from all fetters represented by the gross body and its organs. Refer verse no. 10 below.]

The glorious and divine radiance of the Kundalini is revealed in the form of a subtle and sublime entity that is radiant and splendorous, and that majestically resides in the subtle space of the heart called the ‘Hridaya Akash’.

[This entity is the Atma or the pure consciousness which is self-illuminated and shines in the subtle heart much like the celestial sun which shines in the sky. The allegory here serves to highlight the fact that the Kundalini has the same energy and importance as the sun, and just like a wise man can utilize the sun’s light, heat and energy for his all round benefit, the energy and the potentials of the Kundalini too can be utilized by a wise aspirant for his spiritual welfare. Another purpose is to emphasize that the Atma is as splendorous and radiant as the Kundalini and the sun, but like in the case of the Kundalini which needs to be activated to be of any good for the aspirant, the Atma too needs to be properly cultivated and realised to be of any spiritual good of the aspirant. Otherwise, both the Kundalini and the Atma would

remain neglected and dormant in the body while the person continues to suffer from all sorts of spiritual ailments. It would be an ironical situation wherein gold lies hidden inside the house while a man suffers from financial problems.] (8)."

The *Shandilya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 1, section 7, verse nos. 36/2-5 describes how the Kundalini is activated and its benefits as follows--

"Verse no. 36/2 = The aspiring ascetic should constrict the Kundalini and pull it upwards. This would open the hitherto-closed door for his Moksha (liberation and deliverance).

[This refers to the activation of the Kundalini and opening of the clogged Naadis in the body. The Kundalini is a coiled subtle cosmic energy center of the body that lies at the lower end of the spinal cord, blocking it with one of its ends. The subtle energy of the Kundalini represents the dynamism of the consciousness present in the body of the living being. The Naadi is the general term used for all the tubular ducts present inside the body through which all the life sustaining energy and impulses flow in the body. During Yoga, when the vital winds are heated and activated, they shake the Kundalini and loosen it up. Then they push up through the Kundalini which opens the blocked mouth of the Sushumna Naadi, the main nerve of the spinal cord, and snakes up it to finally reach the top of the head.

The combined force of the vital winds and the dynamic energy of the Kundalini opens the various Granthis (knots) and Chakras (subtle energy centers of the body lying between the lower end of the body and the top of the head) en-route to the top of the head. With these openings, a burst of immense spiritual energy is experienced by the ascetic. The Pran or life-consciousness reaches the top of the head, and when all the conditions are favourable and enough pressure is built up, it finally escapes out of the body through the Brahm-Randhra, the hair-like slit present on the top of the skull. It is called 'Moksha' because the Atma, the consciousness present in the gross body of the ascetic, finds its permanent freedom by breaking free from the fetters of the gross body and escaping into the vast fathomless sky much like a caged bird finding its freedom when it escapes through the trap-door of the cage.

It is called 'Moksha' also because it is the final escape of the consciousness along with the vital winds or Pran which, having escaped from the confines of the gross body through the Brahm-Randhra, merges with the cosmic wind or the air element present outside the body to become one and inseparable from it. The 'Pran' will no longer re-enter the body—meaning its liberation is once and for all; it is its final freedom from confinements and limitations which are against its natural temperament and habit.

The Atma, which is the 'true self' of all living beings and is pure consciousness, is also a synonym of Pran, along with the vital wind and other life-factors in creation which are generally regarded as Pran of a creature, as both the terms mean 'life'. Hence, when it is said that the 'Pran' escapes from limitations or confines of the gross body to enlarge and expand to cover the whole space of the sky once it comes out into the open sky outside, it is implied that the Atma—the 'self' of the ascetic—too has found its Moksha.

Prior to this final freedom, when the Pran had reached the area of the forehead between the two eyebrows en-route to the Brahm-Randhra the aspirant is able to experience a thrilling sensation which gives the aspirant extreme bliss and ecstasy. This is the moment of self-realisation when the ascetic experiences the bliss that is associated with being near and close to the cosmic source of beatitude and felicity

called Brahm. This experience is a fore-runner and acts as a prelude for the final bliss, beatitude and felicity that awaits him when his Pran would escape from the Brahm-Randhra to give him freedom from all his agonies and torments.] (36/2).

"Verse no. 36/3 = The Kundalini lies in a dormant or sleeping state by covering and blocking the mouth of the path (i.e. the Sushumna Naadi) through which it would have to finally move out in the aspirant's ultimate quest for Moksha, or spiritual liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

The Kundalini wraps around this path like a serpent coiled around a tube, tightly clasping it in its embrace and blocking its opening with its hood.

[As stated in verse no. 36/2, the Kundalini represents the dynamic aspect of the consciousness present in the body of the creature. Normally for the un-initiated creature it is lying in a 'sleeping state' which is a metaphoric way of saying that the ignorant creature is unable to know or recognize his true astounding potentials. He does not know that a mighty source of spiritual and mystical power is hidden inside his own body much like the musk hidden in the belly of the musk-deer. It only requires igniting and then nothing would be beyond reach. This ignorance is the reason why the creature is always under pain and suffers from this or that agony; this is the reason why he feels that he is powerless and crippled; this is the cause of his fetters and bondages to this world and the body; this is why he needs the prop of various rituals and doing so many things in order to find ways to free himself from the shackle of this body and the world.

But once enlightenment and awareness dawns upon him he realises that should he fire up this Kundalini by means of the process described in the Upanishads, his deliverance and freedom is certain and within his reach. This ignorance of one's spiritual potentials is metaphorically called the 'sleeping Kundalini', while its removal and the dawn of enlightenment and awareness of one's inherent spiritual strength is called the 'rising of the dormant spiritual energy' in the form of the awakened Kundalini.

The Kundalini is visualized in the form of a snake that lies coiled when asleep. When it is coaxed with a stick it rises up and holds its hood to hiss violently. The same thing happens with the Kundalini. When it is coaxed with the heated vital winds during the process of Yoga that is especially designed to activate the Kundalini, the latter is shaken and stirred. It stands up like a snake holding its hood high and hissing. The heat and the pressure exerted by the vital winds help to push the energy of the Kundalini into the Sushumna Naadi. This is called the opening of the pathway to Brahm because this Naadi leads up right up to the top of the head where the ascetic experiences the bliss of Brahm-realisation.] (36/3).

"Verse no. 36/4 = An ascetic who practices regularly to make the Kundalini activated, and keep it activated, is able to attain Mukti (liberation and deliverance as narrated above).

If the Kundalini (i.e. the subtle cosmic energy that is present inside the body as the dynamism of pure consciousness) rests in the area above the throat, the ascetic is able to find Mukti. Such an aspirant finds enlightenment and self-realisation.

On the other hand, if the Kundalini remains below the throat the aspirant remains mired in ignorance and delusions. Such a man remains trapped and bonded in fetters of ignorance. He cannot find freedom from his spiritual shackles.

[In other words, if the ascetic is able to focus his attention in the forehead and contemplate upon the supreme consciousness that is a fount of extreme bliss and

happiness, he finds liberation and deliverance from the uncountable torments and agonies that are inherent to this gross world. This is because he would have reached the sublime state of self-realisation; he would have risen above the mundane world and meditate on the sublime consciousness by focusing his mind on higher goals of life symbolized by the upper part of the body above the throat, as it is 'head' or 'chief' area of the body where the commanding centre called the brain is situated. He is able to attain enlightenment and self-realisation.

On the other hand, if he remains mired in the lowly affairs of the gross world as symbolized by the attention being focused in the lower part of the body below the throat, the aspirant is deemed to be living in a spiritual void surrounded by delusions and ignorance. Such a man would be more concerned with filling his stomach, looking after the needs of his body and enjoying the pleasures of the sense organs rather than pursuing anything of higher value in spiritual terms. The enlightened man on the other hand would be least bothered about the grosser aspects of creation represented by the lower part of the gross body, and more concerned with noble and auspicious thoughts and pursuance of sublime goals of life symbolized by the upper part or the head where the brain is located. It is here that Brahm is said to have his symbolic abode in the body of the creature.] (36/4).

"Verse no. 36/5 = The Kundalini energy rises up and arrives at the head through the Sushumna Naadi instead of the other two paths open to it, i.e. the Ida and the Pingla Naadis. Therefore, the Sushumna Naadi is the one that takes the aspirant to the divine and supreme abode of Lord Vishnu.

[The Sushumna Naadi goes right up to the top of the skull, while the other two Naadis stop much below it. Refer verse no. 11 of section 4 of this Canto no. 1. It is in the region of the head that the supreme transcendental Brahm is said to have his abode. Lord Vishnu is none other than Brahm personified. So, since the Sushumna Naadi helps the ascetic in his 'self' realisation and Brahm realisation, it is said to be the pathway that leads one to the divine abode of Lord Vishnu. This is why the Sushumna Naadi is also called the Vishnu Naadi as well as the Brahm Naadi.

Besides this, meditation and contemplation are exercises that require intense concentration of the mind and intellect. When the combined efforts of the mind-intellect lead to self-realisation and experiencing of bliss, it is most convincing for the ascetic. This is true enlightenment as it does not require further testing and proving. It is a sublime state of consciousness that is a metaphor for Brahm-realisation.] (36/5). "

The Shape of the Kundalini and how the latent fire element in the body is kindled has been described in the *Yog Kundalini Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 82-84, while the divine feeling of extreme bliss and ecstasy that is experienced upon self-realisation and awareness of the presence of consciousness in one's own bosom at the culmination of this process of Yoga has been narrated in verse nos. 85-87 of this Upanishad. To quote—

"Verse nos. 82-84 = The Kundalini is like the coiled stem of the lotus flower, while the Mool Kand (the clot of Naadis at the base of the spinal cord) is like the bulbous root of the same lotus. Much like a snake coiled in such a way that the end of its tail is inside its mouth, this Kundalini lies with its mouth covered by the Brahm Randhra Naadi¹ [82 ½].

To awaken this Kundalini, the aspirant is to sit in a Padmasan posture, constrict and pull up the anus, do Kumbhak (holding of the breath during Pranayam), divert the vital wind (i.e. the Apan wind) of the body upwards and make it strike the

Swadisthan Chakra² so that the dormant fire element in the body is ignited³ [84]. (82-84).

[Note—¹This Brahm Randhra Naadi is the Sushumna Naadi—so called because it goes right up to the top of the head where the Brahm Randhra, the hair-like slit in the skull, is located, and through which the vital winds find their way out when an expert ascetic wishes to leave the body at the time of his death. In other words, the lower end of the Sushumna Naadi blocks the opening of the Kundalini like a cork on a bottle.

²The Swadisthan Chakra is the swirling subtle energy center of the body located in the region of the groins of males and the Bhug area of females. It has a 5-headed male phallus like a sprouting seed and its counterpart in the female is the clitoris.

³In essence this verse means that when the Apan wind is restricted by doing Mool Bandha involving the closing of the anus along with Jalandhar Bandha when the throat is closed and constricting of the muscles of the abdomen during Uddiyan Bandha, an immense amount of pressure is exerted on the Apan wind. It buffets the Swadisthan Chakra which is like blowing of air in the lower end of the furnace. This would obviously stoke the fire energy present in a dormant form in the Kundalini. This situation is like the lighting of the fire in an oven. When air is blown into the ovens from the lower end, the firewood placed on the grate catches fire easily and burns vigorously.]

“Verse nos. 85-86 = By this method the sleeping or dormant Kundalini is awakened or shaken up and made active. The subtle cosmic energy present in it is then unleashed and it rises up to pierce through the three Granthis, viz. the Brahm Granthi, the Rudra Granthi and the Vishnu Granthi, besides piercing through the six Chakras and reach Sahastraar Chakra symbolically depicted in the form of a subtle lotus with a thousand petals present in the top of the head, i.e. the Brahm Randhra which is located at the top of the head just below the cranium.

At this point of Yoga one experiences a glorious spray of extreme bliss and ecstasy drenching him from all side, which metaphorically represents the union of the divine Shakti with the eternal fount of truthfulness, bliss and joyous abandon called Shiva. [Here, the ‘Shakti’ is symbolised by the cosmic divine conscious energy that is made active by doing Yoga and activating of the Kundalini, and ‘Shiva’ represents the awareness that comes with it of the presence of the pure consciousness called the Atma as one’s true ‘self’. This Atma is eternal, truthful, imperishable, immutable and non-dual; it is divine and sublime. When the aspirant becomes aware of it, he is filled with an extreme sense of spiritual achievement and the fulfilment of his desire for attaining a state of eternity and perpetual bliss. He would want nothing more; he has reached the pinnacle of spiritual attainment that is rare and difficult to achieve.] (85-86).

(L) Relationship of Chakras

With Gyan (knowledge; gnosis), Bhakti (devotion) & Yoga (meditation)

The thinking process of a man acts like a direction in which the headlamp of a car or the focus of a torch is turned towards, and the beam of light representing the energy flow of the different Chakras will consequentially be directed in that direction to the exclusion of all other directions. So, if the mind is assiduously fixed on a particular subject, the energy of the Kundalini (the chief Chakra) will be focused on it. If the subject is Brahma, the energy will be focused on Brahma; if the subject is the world, the energy will be diverted there. The focusing of the mind is like putting the reflector behind the bulb of the headlamp or torch, as it helps to concentrate the light of the bulb to a particular direction instead of allowing it to scatter and dissipate.

Gyan Yoga helps in long term focusing of attention on the higher aspects of existence— ‘self’ at the micro level and ‘universe’ at the macro level. This is why diligent perusal of Gyan (knowledge) raises a man from mundane existence to an enlightened existence where the noise and hustle of the world does not disturb him and he remains ever blissful, whereas the worldly man pursues this bliss and is not able to achieve it, and throws in the towel in frustration. Devotion (Bhakti) to God helps in this endeavour because it has a direct link with the heart, and a controlled heart acts like an assistant for the mind. So, Gyan, Bhakti and Yoga are not at odds with each other, they do not contradict and neutralise each other, but on the contrary they are the so-called three legs of the stool on which Brahma rests.

Taking a leaf from science, we can say that if we vibrate at a fine frequency, we become receptive to a finer quality of consciousness and its attendant elevation even as a shortwave radio transmission travels longer distances compared to the medium wave. Again, since energy resists its opposite force, e.g. the positive resists or neutralises the negative, the positive spiritual energy generated by the risen Kundalini helps to neutralise the negative energy generated by such things as anger, joy, anguish, frustration, arrogance, passions, avarice, greed etc.

So we can say that the three aspects of spiritualism— Gyan (knowledge), Bahkti (devotion) and Yoga (meditation) are the three legs that hold aloft the flag of enlightened consciousness which has been unfurled by dedication, commitment and diligence. When a flag flutters in the wind atop a mast, it gives a feeling of accomplishment and pride to the people who ‘look up’ (and not down) at it as a symbol of their identity, dignity, achievement and self respect. They salute an unfurled and fluttering flag, and not a curled one. So, we salute enlightened, self-realised people, and not those in whom consciousness and divine energy are lying curled up in the form of the unfurled Kundalini. Since we have to make efforts to raise a flag on the mast before it starts fluttering, we have to make efforts to acquire Gyan, have Bhakti and do Meditation. But once the objective is achieved and success obtained, it reveals itself in an expression of ecstasy and exhilaration that comes with an accomplished task.

Appendix: no. 2

The different States of Existence of Consciousness

The Atma or the soul of a living being is ‘pure consciousness and the true self’ of the creature. It has many states of existence according to metaphysics—e.g. the 1st state called the waking state or ‘Jagrat’, the 2nd state called the dreaming or ‘Swapna’, and the 3rd called the deep sleep state of consciousness or ‘Sushupta’. There is a 4th state also, and it is called ‘Turiya’, which is obtained as a result of going beyond the 3rd stage of deep sleep, and it is a permanent state of bliss and felicity in which the conscious Atma usually lives in ordinary people who are said to be self-realised. Beyond this 4th state is the Turiyateet, literally the state which is beyond the Turiya state and in which the Atma (pure consciousness) is free from all the encumbrances and characters displayed by it during the other four states. Therefore, Turiyateet would be the 5th state of existence of the Atma, and the higher transcendental state when the spiritual aspirant experiences oneness with Brahm. The Turiyateet state is the state of existence of ‘super-consciousness’ on a perpetual basis. Whereas the Turiya state is the hallmark of those who are self-realised, the Turiyateet state is the benchmark for those who are Brahm-realised. The Turiya state is the preliminary ground which paves the way for attaining the Turiyateet state.

To start with the understanding of these different states of existences of the consciousness, we have to begin with the fundamental two states in which the creature lives in this world. These two are the following—(1) the waking and (2) the sleeping states. For the purposes of analyzing the behaviour and existential states of the creature during these two fundamental stages, they have been classified into three distinct states as follows—the waking state called ‘Jagrat’, the dream state called ‘Swapna’, and the deep sleep state called ‘Sushupta’. Beyond these three, there are two transcendental states called Turiya and Turiyateet states of existence of the consciousness in which self-realisation and Brahm-realisation are possible, or which mark the state in which those who are self-realised and Brahm-realised exist. It is the transcendental state of supreme enlightenment and self-realisation.

References--(1) The *three states of existence of the consciousness* have been described in the following Upanishads amongst others—(a) Shukla Yajur Veda—Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad 2/1/16-20, 4/3/9-38. (b) Krishna Yajur Veda—Brahm/Amrit Bindu, verse no. 11; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 11; Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 20-23, 27-32. (c) Atharva Veda—Prashna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 2-6.

(2) The *four states of existence of the consciousness* have been described in the following Upanishads amongst others—(a) Shukla Yajur Veda—Trishikhi Brahman Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 149-150; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 2/1/16-20, 4/3/9-38; Subalo-panishad, Canto 4 full as well as Canto 9, verse no. 1-7; Paingalo-panishad, 2/11-16; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 2/4-2/5; Turiyateet Upanishad. (b) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 59-64, 72; Canto 4, verse no. 11-20; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1, 20-21; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Dhyana Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/12-93/15; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 4; Shaarirak Upanishad, verse no. 14; Brahm/Amrit

Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 11. (c) Atharva Veda tradition—Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Atharvashikha Upanishad; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4-7; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 1, 24-26; Canto 6, verse no. 4, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-16, 19-20; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 5-8; Param Hans Parivarjak Upanishad, paragraph no. 6; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 25; Canto 2, verse nos. 12-16; Canto 3, verse nos. 10, 13, 16-18; Canto 5, verse nos. 16, 46, 84-85, 88-89, 109-111.

(3) The *five states of existence of the consciousness* have been described in the following Upanishads amongst others—(a) Shukla Yajur Veda—Turiyateet Upanishad; Subalo-panishad, Canto 9, verses 1-7; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 2 full, and section 4, verse no. 1; Paingalo-panishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 11-15. (b) Krishna Yajur Veda—Dhyanbindu Upanishad, verse nos. 93/12—93/15. (c) Atharva Veda--Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 3-4. .

We will now endeavour to analyse all these five states of existence of the conscious Atma in simple terms in brief.

According to the *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 11, there are three types of world that the Jiva lives in. They pertain to the three states of consciousness in this world. They are Vishwa (the world as the individual creature perceives it in its waking state of consciousness), Taijas (the world as the individual creature perceives it in its dreaming state of consciousness), and Pragya (the world as the individual creature perceives it in its deep sleep state of consciousness).

(a) The 1st stage is called waking or *Jagrat*. During this state, a creature's sense organs that constitute its gross body are active and they receive inputs from the physical material world outside which they in turn transfer to the mind which forms the creature's subtle body. This mind then filters through the clutter of information, then either orders the organs of action to respond accordingly, or it consults its supervisor, the intellect, for advice. Meanwhile, the mind stores all the information in its data bank for future reference much like the record room of an office. The true self of the creature, the pure conscious Atma, is like the King in whose secretariat the mind and intellect work, and therefore the Atma is the final Authority which takes the final decision and is responsible for all the things done by each of these individual entities. Even as the King cannot absolve himself for the sins committed by his subjects during his rule or plead ignorance of whatever is happening in his kingdom though he is not directly involved in them or in the day to day routine work of the kingdom as he stays in his palace and cannot be practically expected to control each movement in his kingdom, but he is morally responsible for them and cannot deny this responsibility. Similarly, the Atma of the creature is responsible for each and every thing that the creature does though the Atma is limited to its palace-like residence in the heart of the creature. So, the otherwise immaculate Atma is accused of things that body or mind of the creature does because the Atma is at the helm of affairs.

During this Jagrat state, the Atma interacts with the outside world through the medium of the sense organs of the gross body (i.e. the physical body). The sense organs of perception of the body collect information from the external world and pass them over to the mind, which in turn processes them and passes necessary instructions to the organs of action on the one hand, and files data for future reference in its

memory bank on the other hand. The mind would also refer to the intellect those things which are not routine in nature.

The Jagrat state is when the consciousness is aware of the external world of material objects, and this is made possible through the medium of the sense organs of perceptions such as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin which enables the creature to respectively see, hear, smell, taste and feel this world. The creature's responses are carried out with the help of the organs of action such as the hands which receive, the legs that take him to the desired place, the mouth that helps him to speak and eat, the excretory organs that helps it to eliminate waste from the body, and the genitals which helps him to recreate and enjoy the sensual pleasures of the world. These organs are located in the gross body, and since the world is experienced through them, the latter is also deemed to be gross. The coordination of all the perceptions and actions is done by the mind-intellect which is the subtle part of the body.

The first stage of Jagrat or waking state of consciousness has been beautifully described in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 20; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 16-19, 31, 34-35.

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 5 describes the first state of existence of consciousness, called the Jagrat or waking state. Now let us see what it says—The cosmic, divine, sublime and ethereal monosyllabic word OM is known as 'Akshar' as it is imperishable and immortal. [The Sanskrit word 'Akshar' has two meanings—one is a 'letter' and the other is something that 'does not decay, is imperishable and eternal'. OM is likened to a 'letter' because it is a monosyllabic sound. For the purpose of study and analysis of its magnificent divine aspects it is hypothetically split into three (A, U, M), four (A, O, U, M) and even six (A, O, U, M, Chandra Bindu and Ardha Maatra) components. It ought to be remembered that OM is not an ordinary monosyllable, but it is the Beej Mantra for the supreme transcendental Authority of creation and the cosmic Consciousness known as 'Brahm' that is at the root of everything that exists. This 'cosmic Consciousness' is known as Parmatma, the supreme Atma, the Brahm, the Supreme Being, at the macrocosmic level of creation, and as the Atma, the individual soul of the creature known as the Jiva, the living being, at the microcosmic level of creation.]

The entire visible world is but a manifestation/revelation of OM. In other words, the world is a visible form of the various aspects of OM (and since OM is the Beej Mantra for Brahm, this world is a visible manifestation of the latter). The visible physical world establishes and makes evident or visible the magnificent and stupendous glory of that invisible supreme Authority of creation known as the sublime Consciousness or the divine Brahm that is represented by the ethereal sound of OM.

Whatever existed, whatever exists and whatever shall ever exist in the future, as well as any other dimension or aspect of time and space which is beyond these three, are also nothing else but a manifestation or an extension of OM as a representative of Brahm. It is all-inclusive and comprehensive in nature.

Surely, everything is Brahm and a manifestation of Brahm, and nothing else. Therefore, it is also OM in a visible and manifested form. [Since everything is a manifestation of Brahm, and OM is a word used to indicate Brahm as it is a Beej Mantra of Brahm, it follows that the entire creation is a symbol of OM in its physical form. This eclectic world view of creation creates a high level of equanimity of thought, and establishes uniformity and universality in this creation. It removes all causes or basis of dichotomies, schisms, frictions, ill-will and jealousy, thereby

instilling harmony and calmness in the entire creation just like the case of the word OM which is treated as a monosyllabic sound though it has four sound components that are perfectly integrated in its sound structure.

Hence, though we assign different names and categories to different units of creation for the purpose of dealing with them in day-to-day life, it will be wise and enlightened to regard them as an integral and an inseparable part of one wholesome cosmic entity for all practical purposes.

As has been said above, OM is the Beej Mantra of Brahm. Brahm is known and recognized by this word OM. They are synonymous with each other. If this world is a visible manifestation of Brahm and an extension of its glory, it follows that the world is actually a manifestation and an extension of OM and its glory. Again, since Brahm is pure Consciousness, it follows that what is basic to this world is 'consciousness' and nothing else. In other words, if 'Brahm' and 'consciousness' are removed from this world, nothing worthy remains in it. Hence, Brahm or cosmic Consciousness is the 'Tattwa' of creation; it is the essential and basis unit of creation around which the rest of the edifice of creation is moulded.

OM has four basic sounds—viz. the sound of the letter 'A' (as in son) which represents the first aspect of Brahm symbolizing the initiation of creation, 'Oo or U' (like the letter 'O' in the word go) stands for the second aspect of Brahm and corresponds to the development, expansion and growth of the world, 'M' (as in mum) stands for the third aspect of Brahm and corresponds to the conclusion of the world, and finally the prolonged nasal sound of 'M' that is made after OM has been pronounced completely and the mouth closed stands for the fourth aspect of Brahm, and it corresponds to the time between the last creation and the beginning of a new phase. Hence, it naturally follows that the entire creation is nothing but a revelation of the four subtle and most esoteric aspects of the supreme Consciousness known as Brahm that is envisioned in the form of a sound equivalent to that made by saying the monosyllabic word 'OM'. This is why OM is regarded as the Beej Mantra for Brahm just like we have the monosyllabic word 'Raam/Raan(g)' as the Beej Mantra for Lord Ram because the Lord's name 'Ram' is based on a single Sanskrit letter 'Ra' as in the word run.

The four letters of OM, i.e. A, O, U and M, exist only in a hypothetical plane and are employed for the express purpose of analysis and study. It must be remembered that OM is a monosyllabic sound that is one, continuous, and unbroken sound. These letters have been imagined just for the purpose of understand OM. This instance is cited to explain how the entire creation and the four states of existence of consciousness are indistinguishable from one another when we consider the entire creation in a holistic and wholesome manner. Similarly, this also explains how Brahm is one single indivisible and immutable whole though it has been said to have four Paads in the present Upanishad as well as in other Upanishads.]

The world is a visible and gross manifestation of what is essentially invisible, sublime, subtle and supreme entity—i.e. the visible gross physical world is a manifestation of Brahm who is invisible, subtle, sublime and supreme. The visible and verifiable world proves that there is something beyond the spectrum of visibility that is real and truthful, and of which it is an image. That essential element which forms the 'soul' and the 'basic identity' of the world is called its 'Atma'. Since it is Brahm that is at the core of all aspects of creation, it follows that Brahm is also the 'Atma or soul' or 'essence and fundamental aspect' of creation, or the 'Tattwa' of creation—both at the macrocosmic level of creation, in which case it is called the

‘Paramatma’ (the supreme and transcendental Atma), as well as at the microcosmic level of creation, in which case it is simply called the Atma of the individual creature.

This Atma or Parmatma has four Paads or limbs or aspects corresponding to the four Paads of Brahm represented by the four sounds of OM. Again, since the Atma is nothing but pure consciousness, it follows that the four Paads of the Atma or Brahm represent the four states of existence of the ‘consciousness’.

[Although the supreme Brahm is indivisible, immutable and eternal, and it cannot be fractioned or partitioned, we hypothetically divide its entire being into four stages or states of existence just in order to understand or grasp its full form or nature like the monosyllabic sound OM that has been split into four components just for the purpose of study and analysis. That is, this division is done to facilitate study and comprehension of an entity that is usually beyond the reach of the mind and the senses.

The universal sound OM is split into four components A, O, U and M. These are regarded as being representatives of the four aspects of creation—viz. the origin, the development, the expansion and growth, and the conclusion respectively. They also respectively represent the four states of existence of consciousness—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, Swapna or dreaming state, Sushupta or deep sleep state, and Turiya or post-Sushupta state. This latter concept is explained below.]

The supreme transcendental Atma or the cosmic Consciousness, also known as ‘Brahm’ and represented by the word OM, has so-called four states of existence—viz. (a) The waking state of consciousness called ‘Jagrat’ (or Vishwa), (b) the dream state of consciousness called ‘Swapna’ (or Taijasa), (c) the deep sleep state of consciousness called ‘Pragna’, and (d) the ‘Turiya’ state of consciousness which is synonymous with the supreme blissful state of consciousness called ‘pure Brahm’, and which is beyond the earlier three states of existence of consciousness.

To begin with, the 1st state of consciousness, called the ‘First Paad’ or the first leg of the conscious Atma, is being described here in this verse as follows—

During the waking state of consciousness, the entire manifest gross world is the Atma’s play-ground. The consciousness is spread in all the directions of the gross world because during this waking state of its existence it is aware of the entire length and breath of this world and all its happenings. Since this world is gross, the Atma during this waking state also becomes gross in nature because of its association with this gross world. The Atma assumes the basic gross character of this world as it is invariably influenced by the gross nature of its surrounding habitat with which it has to keep constant contact. During the Jagrat state, the Atma of the creature interacts with the physical gross world in which the creature lives. The Atma keeps company with the material sense objects of this world through the sense organs of the body of the creature. This contact is bound to have its influence upon the Atma, and since the world is gross and artificial, since it is dominated by the three Gunas (Sata, Raja and Tama) in varying proportions, as well as by Maya (delusions) along with its own array of problems, it follows that this influence is not positive at all, it is not conducive to the Atma’s welfare and peace. Such is the influence of the Jagrat state that the Atma becomes restless and agitated; it forgets that its primary nature is one of being eternally peaceful and rested. In brief, the Atma acquires some degree of grossness and a tainted character so typical of this world.

From another angle this concept can be understood as follows—the conscious Atma, which essentially has no form and attributes, manifests its self in the form of the visible world, and resides in all the forms that this world takes. This is because Atma and Brahm are synonymous, and it is Brahm that is revealed in the form of the

world. That is, all the living creatures of the world have the same Atma or pure consciousness in them. In other words, the Atma assumes the gross body of all the living beings, and it is with these bodies that the Atma of the individual interacts with the world of material sense objects. The Atma becomes aware of the presence of the various sense objects of the world by the medium of the sense organs of the gross body. These organs help the Atma to perceive the world and respond to it. That is why they are called organs of perception and organs of action of the Atma. The Atma is linked to the world through the sense organs that collectively make up the gross body of the creature.

Hence, during the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness, the Atma has spread its tentacles in the external material world and its sense objects which are primarily gross in nature. It lives in this world just like it lives inside the body of the individual creature. Therefore, the gross world becomes its de-facto body while the Atma exists in the Jagrat (waking) state. It begins to identify its self with the gross body (and forgets that it is most sublime and subtle in nature, and is the invisible consciousness that has no form). During the Jagrat state, the Atma is not only aware of the gross world but relates to it very intimately.

Hence, it is metaphorically said that the seven worlds¹ are the Atma's gross body during the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness—it physically lives in them, it mentally and emotionally relates to them, it is involved in them, and it is attached to them. During the Jagrat state, the Atma thinks that the external world is all that there is to it in existence, that the truth about which the scriptures speak is the external physical world with which it physically interacts during this state. But the deluded Atma forgets that the scriptures also speak that this world is an imagination of the mind because it has its origin in the mental wish of the supreme Creator to create something, that therefore it is artificial, deceptive, deluding and entrapping by its inherent nature. It becomes difficult for the Atma to realise the truth of this conclusion of the scriptures as it physically interacts with the gross world and feels its present in tangible terms. Therefore, the Atma takes to this world like fish to water, not realizing that this plunge would land it in a grave bog of slush and quicksand. Therefore, the otherwise immaculate and untainted Atma, which is regarded as the pure consciousness personified, becomes tainted and corrupted by all the characteristic negativities, unholy influences and demeaning qualities typical of this world.

[The seven worlds represent all forms of the living creation, and all forms of creatures that live in them. Hence, they symbolically refer to all forms of life where the Atma or the pure consciousness is aware of the existence of the external gross world—even in a rudimentary form.]

The Atma uses its nineteen symbolic 'mouths'² to eagerly devour or passionately taste and imbibe the sweetness of the external world and the numerous comforts and pleasures it has to offer.

[Even as a man uses his mouth to partake delicious eatables, this Atma uses its so-called mouths to 'taste or sample' the extraordinary charms and juicy succulence of the external world, its material comforts and the pleasures of the sense objects. And just like the man gets addicted to some tasty eatable, the Atma gets hooked to the world and its charms. It then goes out to hammer and tong to grasp the world and 'devour it' in a symbolic manner by remaining engrossed in it and thinking of nothing else but this world like a hungry man let loose on a dining table. The Atma gets hooked to the world and its material sense objects. Rather, the world attaches itself to the Atma like the leech which sucks the blood of wisdom, erudition, rationality, enlightenment and truthfulness out of the Atma, making the latter lose its pristine

pure, uncorrupted and blissful nature. The Atma acts like a greedy bee that hops from flower to flower sucking a bit of nectar from this and a bit from that. It also behaves like a greedy bird that hops from one fruit to another on a tree, nibbling a bit of all of them till the end of the day, resulting in destroying all the fruits, littering the ground under the tree, but still remaining unsatisfied, and feeling tired at the end of the day.]

That supreme and sovereign entity which enjoys this gross world and is aware of its existence is called 'Vaishwanar'. This is the supreme Brahm's first Paad or aspect. It is also the first form or state of existence of the Atma. (5).

[Note—¹The seven subtle forms of the world are represented by the seven words pronounced by Brahma, the creator, at the time of creation. They are the following—Bhu, Bhuvaha, Swaha, Maha, Janaha, Tapaha, Satyam).

According to Brahmaand Puran (BP) and Vaaman Puran (VP) there are the following lokas— 'Bhu' or earth [BP-3,4,2-18]; 'Bhuvaha' or the space between the earth and the heaven [BP-3,4,2-19]; 'Swaha' or the heavens known as Brahma's abode; the space beyond the earth's atmosphere; cosmic wind represented by the solar wind blows here [BP-3,4,2-20]; 'Maha' or the world created by Brahma pronouncing the divine word Maha meaning the great heaven or the outer space; it is believed that great sages and seers stay here; it is 1000 Yojans or appx. 8000 miles away from the Swaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-21; VP-52,21-22]; 'Janaha' so called because it was to be inhabited by the humans and the cows [BP-3,4,2-22; VP-52, 22]; 'Tapaha' or the Loka where great amount of austerity and penances are done; it is said to be 60 million Yojans or appx. 60 x 8 million miles away from the Janaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-24; VP-52, 23]; and 'Satyam' or the truthful heaven where the supreme Lord has his abode; it is 300 million Yojans or appx. 300 x 8 million miles beyond the Tapaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-25; VP-52, 24].

According to some legends, the distances of various mythological Lokas from the earth or Bhu Loka is as follows—the Bhuvha Loka is situated at a distance of 25 Lakh Yojans from earth, the Swaha Loka is situated at a distance of 50 Lakh Yojans from earth, the Maharloka is situated at a distance of 1 Crore Yojans from earth, the Jana Loka is situated at a distance of 2 Crore Yojans from earth, the Tapa Loka is situated at a distance of 4 Crore Yojans from earth, and the Satya Loka is situated at a distance of 8 Crore Yojans from earth.

1 Yojan = a distance of 4, 8 and 16 miles according to different calculations. It is usually taken to be equivalent to 8 miles.

1 Lakh = one hundred thousand (1,00,000). 1 Crore = ten Lakhs (10 x 1,00,000).

The seven Bhuvans or Lokas according to the Vedantic view are the following:— the seven organs of perception situated in the region of the head—viz. the two eyes + two ears + two nostrils + one tongue/mouth = seven. Refer Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, section 1, verse no. 8.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 4, verse no. 4 also refers to these seven Lokas as being a part of the first Paad or leg or limb or aspect or facet of the cosmic Brahm.

²The nineteen symbolic mouths of the Atma are the different organs, both gross and the subtle through which it interacts with the external world and recognizes it at all. These are as follows—(a) the five organs of perception such as eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin; (b) the five organs of action such as

the hand, leg, mouth, anus/excretory and genitals; (c) the five Prans or the vital winds such as the main Pran which controls the very life of the creature and all other functions including the other Prans or vital winds, the Apaana which controls digestion and excretion, the Samaana which helps in distribution of nourishment and blood equally throughout the body, the Vyaana which control the activities of other winds and helps in maintaining pressure and balance in the body, and the Udaana which controls the power to rise and move around; and (d) the four 'Antaha-karans' are the four sheaths that surround the Atma and form its subtle forms; these are the food sheath, the vital air sheath, the mental sheath and the intellectual sheath. [According to the Shaarirak Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 4, the four aspects of the 'Antahakaran' (the inner-self consisting of the subtle body; the conscience; the sub-conscious) consists of the following four units—viz. the Mana (mind), the Buddhi (intellect), the Chitta (the faculty of reasoning, thought, understanding, attention, the sub-conscious etc.), and Ahankar (ego, pride, haughtiness and the accompanying arrogance and hypocrisy; lack of humility, simplicity and piety).]

These are called the so-called 'mouths' of the soul because it is through them that the soul partakes of this world. The entity whose gross body enjoys and experiences this world is called the 'Viraat' at the macrocosmic level and 'Vishwa' at the microcosmic level. This is the 1st step to understand the supreme Soul called 'Parmeshwar' or the supreme Lord known as Brahm.]

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³Vaishwanar Atma—References: (a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 21; Pran Agnihotra Upanishad, verse no. 15. (b) Atharva Veda’s Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 3.

The term Vaishwanar in simple words means the form of Brahm that is as large and as vast as the universe, enclosing it from all sides like a moat of a fort, and even existing beyond it. This all-inclusive, all-pervading and all-encompassing macrocosmic form of Brahm is the ‘Vishwa’ or the world because this world is a manifestation of Brahm, it is Brahm revealed in its myriad and diverse forms, and it is the glory of Brahm on display. If fact, if one wishes to witness Brahm, he must observe Brahm at play in this world itself. The physical aspect of Brahm in the form of the visible world is equivalent to the Jagrat state of consciousness because it is in this state that the creature sees the world. Here the word ‘creature’ refers to his Atma or soul which is pure consciousness and his true self. This Atma is called Vaishwanar because, like Brahm, it is manifested as all forms of life in this world. [Refer Mandukya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, verse no. 3.]

The Atma is called a Vaishwanar because the man becomes aware of the world when he sees it with his own eyes. This is why it is called the ‘waking’ state of consciousness. The presence of the consciousness known as the Vaishwanar in the eye is a metaphor for this waking state because when a man ‘sees’ anything only when he is awake and not while he sleeps.

The word ‘Vaishwanar’ has many connotations as follows—(i) The fire used in sacrificial rituals. (ii) The microcosmic pure consciousness that resides inside the body of the creature and helps it to digest food. (iii) Vedanta says that it is the pure consciousness that is a fraction of the Supreme Consciousness, and it resides in the body of the creature even as the Supreme Consciousness resides in the macrocosmic vast body of Nature or creation. It is representative of the supreme, transcendental entity that is the Lord and the primary cause and the governing authority of the whole creation. (iv) Since creatures have myriad forms, it has as many forms as the creatures themselves, incorporating all of them in it. Hence, it is also called ‘Viraat Purush’ (which means the vast, colossus, all incorporating, all-pervading, almighty form of the microcosmic Atma of the creature as well as the macrocosmic Atma of the creation; it is measureless, infinite and eternal). This is the subtle form of ‘Vaishwanar’. (v) The gross manifestation of this ‘Vaishwanar’ is the ‘Annamaya Kosh’ or the food sheath which is one of the five sheaths enclosing the Atma of the creature. (vi) Its state of existence is defined as the ‘waking state of consciousness’. (vii) The word also means—relating to or belonging to all men, omnipresent, known and worshipped everywhere, universal, general, common, complete, immutable, full in number, a collective noun for all the Gods, one who is all commanding and almighty.]

(b) Next comes the state in which a person sleeps, and in metaphysical terms it is called Supta. This is the sleeping state of consciousness. Here, the creature is alive because it’s Pran or the vital winds move around and remain active in its different Naadis (tubular ducts in the body such as the nerves which number seventy thousand).

The *Prashna Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 2 very precisely describes what sleep is. To quote—”Just like the case of the rays of the sun collecting themselves and collapsing in the disc of the setting sun and re-emerging the next day when the sun rises, the various sense perceptions of the body relevant to different sense organs withdraw themselves and rest in the Mana or the mind of the Purush or the man (when he goes to sleep). Hence, in this situation he does not see, hear, taste, smell or feel (because the sense organs of perception related to these functions have become inactive), and neither does he speak (because the organ of action known as the mouth has become inactive), accept anything (because the organ of action known as the hand has become inactive), expels stool or other wastes from the body (because the organs of action concerned with these functions have become inactive), and enjoy anything (especially the enjoyment of sex and other sensual gratifications because the organs related to such enjoyments too have become inactive). In fact, he makes no effort of any kind.

This state of existence of the creature or his consciousness is called ‘sleep’ (2).”

In this state of ‘Supta’ or sleep, the consciousness is said to exist in two forms—viz. as Swapna and as Sushupta.

The *Swapna* or dreaming state is the 2nd state of consciousness when the latter has withdrawn its self from being actively involved in the outside world through the medium of the sense organs of perception and action. But the mind does not sleep and remains active as before, though this activity is at the subtle level of the sub-conscious. Here, the consciousness remains active through the medium of the vital winds, called the various Prans present inside the body, and moves in the different Naadis (tubular ducts in the body, such as the nerves and veins etc.) which keep the mind working. Refer Shukla Yajur Veda’s Paingalo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 12, and Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 18; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 20; Krishna Yajur Veda’s Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 58-60; Rig Veda’s Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 19.

This Pran is deemed to be synonymous with the life factors and consciousness in the body as well as with the latent fire element present inside the body which gives the energy, strength and vitality to the body to live and remain active. If it were not for the fire element (Tej) and the wind element (Pran), the consciousness (Atma, the ‘self’) would have found it difficult to live in the body. In fact, the *Prashna Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 3 clearly states that the Pran in its manifestation as Agni or fire.

Since no external stimuli is being received from the outside world, the mind begins to replay what is stored in its memory bank and uses its stupendous abilities to imagine and recreate situations and circumstances in an imaginary world of dreams. Since the Atma living in the causal body depends upon the mind living in the subtle body to feel or sense anything pertaining to this world, for all practical purposes therefore the Atma begins to live in this new world of dreams conjured up by the mind and gets as involved in it as it was during the waking state. Since the mind is active here, the man remembers some of his dreams even when he wakes up. So as far as the Atma is concerned, the two states of waking and dreaming means the same—the world exists for it in both these two states.

During the sleeping stage, the Atma sees dreams. This is called Swapna state of existence of the consciousness. The *Prashna Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 4, verse no. 5 describes what a dream is and how the creature sees it. To

quote—"The exalted deity (i.e. the Consciousness or the Atma) experiences its glories and majesty made evident during the Jagrat or waking state of existence. [During the waking state, all the organs are active, and the creature's true 'self', i.e. his Atma, can witness the stupendous achievements that the body can attain with the help of its sense organs. Since the Atma is the truthful identity of the person who makes the various achievements and obtains success in different fields with the help of the organs of the body while he is awake, it is the Atma who is supposed to be the actual beneficiary of these achievements and successes. So, the Atma watches them with pride and feels satisfied.]

Now when the same deity sleeps, it recollects or remembers those things that it had seen or experienced while it was awake. It sees, hears and experiences those things once again during the sleeping state, not at the physical plane but at the subtle plane of the sub-conscious.

Not only limited to this, it can even see, hear and experience things that it could not see, hear and experience during the waking state because then it had to face the barrier of the limitations of the gross body and the gross physical world. Since this barrier is removed during the sleeping state and the subtle aspect of the body consisting of the mind and the sub-conscious are given freedom to fly according to their inclinations, the deity can even see, hear and experience things unimaginable during the waking state of its existence. It gets so involved in this scenario that it becomes a part of it much like it was the part of the waking world (5)."

The two states of Jagrat and Swapna have been explained in detail elsewhere also, for instance in the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 9-14.

Ordinarily, the consciousness oscillates between the Jagrat (waking) and Swapna (dreaming) state as affirmed in the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 16-18, 34-35.

According to *Paingalo-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 12, when the creature is in dreaming state of existence, his Prans (vital life-consciousness represented by the vital winds) moves along the various Naadis (tubular ducts in the body).

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in Canto 2, verse no. 61, describes how 'dreams' are seen. To quote—

"Verse no. 61 = When the Buddhi (the thinking mind which remembers and ponders and determines upon something or its different aspects relying upon the data collected and previously stored in the sub-conscious part of the brain) is freed from any external interference from the sense organs of the gross body as happens during the waking state of the latter, it is then relocated in the various Naadis (nerves of the body) and sustained by the consciousness flowing through them. It is in this state that the man dreams¹.

Therefore it naturally follows that when the mind (awareness of existence; the sub-conscious) stops flowing through the Naadis, i.e. when it too goes into a hibernating state like external sense organ of the body, the man would not dream (61).

[Note—¹During the phase when the man is awake, the external organs of the body continue to receive an unbroken chain of sensory impulses from the external world, and pass them all to the brain through the network of Naadis (nerves). This data is collated and collected by the mind. Some require immediate action—such as the need for eating something when one sees something enticing or when one is hungry. There are other inputs from the

world that the mind stores in the data bank or the sub-conscious that acts like a library for future referral. Some information needs intelligent analysis and is referred to the higher echelons of the brain, called the faculty of the intellect. The intellect either advises the mind with an option or reserves the order for consideration and implementation at a future date. All this continues in an ongoing process throughout the length of a man's life.

Now, when the man is asleep the external organs go on hibernation mode—they neither receive any input nor have to respond to any impulse. In such a state the mind and intellect remain very much active, and now the sub-conscious has a greater say. This is because the mind is freed from all the 'routine file work of the office' when the man was awake. Now the mind has the time to peep into its data bank and ponder upon the collected information to think upon it. This is proved by the fact that it is very usual for a person to 'sleep over complicated matters and then come out with a surprisingly good answer or solution' that had defied all answers or solutions inspite of all his best of efforts during his waking time. Great discoveries, ideas, creative innovations have been made in history while a man had suddenly woken up from sleep with them. This is because the intelligent mind was working full time in association with the sub-conscious to come up with a solution or answer for something that had been bothering it all along.

This is also how dreams are seen. The sub-conscious plays out the things that the mind knew it is capable of doing but could not do because of the limitations imposed by the gross body. During sleep such physical restrictions are removed and the 'mind can fly at its will'.]"

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 6 describes the second state of existence of consciousness, called the Swapna or dreaming state. Now let us see what it says—The 2nd state of existence of the Atma, the pure consciousness, is called the 'Swapna state' of existence, or the dreaming state. The imaginary world that is visualized by the latent 'Vasanas' (passions, desires and yearnings) that are inherently present in the sub-conscious of the creature is called a 'dream'. This is an imaginary world inspired by the Vasanas present in the bosom of the creature.

During this state, the man is virtually lying unconscious and completely inactive in the physical sense as his gross physical body is completely inactive and lying like a log of wood. He lies on the ground as if he had no life in him, and was like a dead man as far as his external activities pertaining to his gross body and its organs are concerned. But during this state of existence known as Swapna (dreaming), the mind remains very much active though the external gross body and its sense organs are completely inactive. During this state, the mind, accompanied by the sub-conscious, is as active as it was during the Jagrat (waking) state, the only difference being in the level of its activity. So, while in the Jagrat state its activity pertained to the gross world, during the Swapna state this activity is happening in a subtle level. A man dreams because the mind and the sub-conscious conjure up a most fascinating world in which the Atma lives during this phase of existence. To a great extent, the capacity of the mind to 'imagine and fly' is fully unleashed and tapped in one's dreams as opposed to the physical world while the man was awake—because while the latter phase presents many physical barriers of practical nature, none such obstacles are there in one's dreams. In some senses, the world of dreams is fancier and more charming than that of the physical world of the waking state simply because

in this subtle state of existence the mind is given wings to imagine and fly according to its wishes without having to cope with any limitations of the physical gross world. [For instance, a man cannot fly in practical terms when he is awake, or he cannot physically jump from a tall building without aid and survive as this would be nothing less than a suicidal jump, he can indeed attempt such feats while dreaming. In fact, the full potentials of the mind and the sub-conscious are unlocked during the dreaming phase—as is proved occasionally when insurmountable problems of daily life face by a harried man find their solutions when he sleeps, leading him to wake up with answers to the same problems that had defied all attempts to solve them earlier.]

It is the mind that imagines, and not the gross body. Therefore, during the Swapna or dreaming state of existence of consciousness, the Atma is very much active and aware of the happenings around it, but instead of them being related to the gross plane of existence they are now confined to an imaginary world conceived in a 'dream'. Hence, 'dream' or the Swapna state of existence of the consciousness is synonymous with that which is an 'imaginary' conception of the mind without any physical gross dimension. It is something that has no real physical existence and pith. In other words, the Atma or the consciousness exists in its 'Sukshma' or the subtle form now in the dreaming state.

For all practical purposes, the Atma (or the creature's 'self' or his consciousness) interacts with this imaginary world of dreams during the 'Swapna' state of existence in the same way as it had been doing in the gross world while it was awake during the waking state called 'Jagrat'. That is, even during a dream, as long as it lasts, the Atma thinks that it is actually interacting with all the participants of that dream; it weeps, it laughs, it plays and it talks with them all as if they were alive and for real in the virtual world. For this purpose, the Atma uses its 'virtual' nineteen organs or mouths as it had been doing while it was interacting with the physical gross world while awake, though now they are in their 'subtle forms' instead of their gross forms.

Therefore, even in the dream state of existence of the Atma, there are seven worlds and nineteen mouths, though they exist in a subtle form, and not in their gross forms. The Atma lives in this subtle world of dreams, is an integral part of it, identifies its self with it, is influenced by it and is as involved and attached to its components in the same way as it did during the waking state.

That Atma which exists in this subtle form, that Atma which exists in the subtle world, and that Atma which uses the subtle organs to interact with this subtle world, is called 'Taijas'. This Taijas is the microcosmic subtle form of the Atma which has its counterpart at the macrocosmic level of creation in the 'Hiranyagarbha'. The latter therefore is the macrocosmic subtle aspect of the cosmic Consciousness very much like the Taijas is at the microcosmic level.

The Taijas has all the constituent parts of the 1st step or stage (called the 'Vishwa') as described in the preceding verse, but instead of being gross by the virtue of its association with the external gross world of material sense objects it now is in a subtle form as it is associated with a subtle world. Instead of being in contact with the deluding outside world involving its gross organs of action and perception, it is now more subtle in nature being based on the mind and its capacity to imagine and fly. [But it must nevertheless be noted that the Atma, the pure consciousness, still does not find pure peace and happiness as it is still buffeted by waves of emotions and the influence of Vasanas in the subtle level of its existence during the dreaming state of its existence as much as it was distracted and influenced by the physical world during the waking state. The only obvious difference is that during the dreaming state there is

no physical barriers and limitations that are natural to the gross body and the gross physical world which has limited the stupendous potentials of the Atma. As compared to the physical gross body, the subtle mind has stupendous powers and potentials—the mind can fly and imagine things that were simply incredulous to even speak of during the waking state of the body, thereby lending the Atma with equal potentials to imagine and reach those realms where it could not ever hope to do while awake. In brief, the Swapna is called ‘subtle’ as it gives ‘wings to the Atma’ and enables it to perform deeds that it was unable to in the Jagrat state. The physical world that exists during the waking state imposes certain inhibitions on the Atma, but all such fetters are removed while it dreams, and therefore it can do unimaginable things during its dream which would be unthinkable for it to do during its interaction with the world while in its waking state of existence.

During the Swapna or dreaming state of existence, the external stimuli from the outside world cease to affect the mind, but the latent and inherent tendencies, called the various ‘Vasanas’, create an imaginary world of perceptions and actions which are far more colourful than the actual world of the waking state, and which form an independent world of their own, called the world of dreams. This state of the Atma is not gross like the 1st stage, but it is a subtle state of existence of the consciousness, the state known as the Taijas state.

The word ‘Taijas’ is derived from the root ‘Tej’ meaning ‘energetic, fast, dynamic, agile, full of vigour and vitality’. It is obvious from the above discussion that the Atma does indeed possess these potentials during the dreaming state of its existence. The word ‘Taijas’ also refers to light and its illumination. Hence, the Atma in this state is illuminated by the virtue of its inherent ability to create something from nothing—i.e. to ‘dream’ of things that do not have any substance and then be convinced that this imaginary world is truthful.] (6)."

(c) Beyond the second state of existence of consciousness is the third eclectic state called the *Sushupta* or deep sleep state. This has been elaborately dealt with in the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 19; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 14-15, 19, 21-30. It has also been described in the Atharva Veda's Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 52; Canto 2, verse nos. 12-13; Canto 3, verse nos. 17-18. During this stage the creature does not dream.

The Sushupta or the deep sleep state of consciousness is the 3rd state in which the mind has also become defunct, and the Atma has withdrawn itself into the exclusive domain of the causal body and lives in seclusion, disconnected with the external world because of the non-involvement of either the gross body or the subtle body. Here it is surrounded by the space of the subtle sky around the heart, called the Hridya Akash. During this state of existence, the vital winds, called the Pran or ‘life’ of the creature, keep on moving in the different Naadis (various ducts such as nerves and veins etc.) as during the dreaming state so as to keep the body alive as is evident from the fact that all the subtle and imperceptible functions of the inner organs of the body such as the liver, kidneys, heart, pancreas, digestive organs, lungs etc. continue uninterrupted as before, because if they cease to function the body would die. It is the mind now that has gone in a defunct state. But this phase is temporary and shows the true nature and fundamental characteristic of the Atma, which is blissful and peaceful, contented and fulfilled, not feeling restless and perplexed in any manner whatsoever because it is now not being disturbed by the mind’s constant nagging. That is why a sound asleep man does not want anything, he does not feel anything, he is not worried

about anything, he is not concerned about anything, and he does not remember anything. That is also why one feels very relaxed and refreshed after even a short deep sleep when the mind and the body both find their rest.

The *Prashna Upanishad* of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 4, verse no. 6 describes in clear terms why a creature stops dreaming. To quote—” When the deity or Lord of the body (i.e. the Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’) withdraws itself into its own realm in the heart, it gets surrounded by ‘Teja’, the splendour and radiance that is natural to it and effuses out of it. In this condition it is deemed to have distanced itself from the Mana (which had made it see dreams as narrated in verse no. 5 above) and the Indris (the sense organs that had made it experience the world and interact with it). [This is because when the Atma, the deity of the body, comes to realise its own glorious nature, it finds true peace and tranquility, it feels exhilarated and happy so much so that now it forsakes the false notion of happiness and comforts that this physical material world and its counterpart seen in the dreams had presented to it to lure it in their snare. The Atma finds so much spiritual solace and succour in the realisation of its own state of enlightenment, the state called Pragya which is glorious, radiant and splendorous, that it need not think or ever worry about the other two states through which it had passed, i.e. the two states of waking and dreaming, to reach this eclectic and exalted state when the Atma is surrounded by its own radiance and splendour. This divine and eclectic state of self realisation is called enlightenment and Pragya—the state of truthful awareness.]

Therefore in this state, the Atma, the deity, does not dream. It experiences true happiness, solace, comfort and bliss. It enjoys the peace and tranquility that this realisation gives it (6).”

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in Canto 2, verse no. 62, describes the ‘Sushupta’ state of consciousness. To quote—

“Verse no. 62 = The consciousness is freed from the buffeting affects of the restless mind during the Sushupta state, i.e. the state of ‘deep sleep’ when there are no dreams and the mind also goes into hibernation like the rest of the gross body. Therefore, in this state the consciousness does not see or remains aware of anything pertaining to the external world¹. It is at complete rest with itself. There is no interference of any kind that would disturb its poise and calm. It is in this state that the consciousness enjoys great bliss and happiness. [This is the reason why a man feels very refreshed and relaxed if he has a ‘dream-less sleep’ even for a short while as opposed to a night long sleep full of dreams.] (62).

[Note—¹This happens because during this state both the active mind and the sub-conscious mind are asleep or inactive. It is the mind that perceives this world; it is the mind that has imagined this world in the first place. During the waking state, this mind makes the consciousness ‘see, hear, taste, smell and feel’ things of this external world through the external organs of perception. During the dreaming state, the sub-conscious mind makes the consciousness repeat the same thing through the dream. Since the Atma or the true ‘self’ of the creature represented by the pure consciousness has to rely upon the mind for all these perceptions and sights of the world, when the mind retires the Atma finds its inherent peace which it had lost due to this constant nagging and interference by its prime minister, the mind. So, if the wise man realises this fact and keep the mind permanently at bay or under tight leash, if he is

successful in keeping this mischief-monger mind at a distance, he can be assured of eternal and everlasting peace even while he is awake just like the transient peace that is obtained while the body is sleeping in the deep sleep state which is beyond the dreaming state of sleep but is short lived.]”

The *Yog Kundalini Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 3, verse nos. 20-23, 27-32 describes the three levels of existence as follows—

“Verse no. 20-23 = When the spiritual aspirant who has developed this wisdom of thought that the supreme entity that empowers the faculty of speech to speak is the supreme transcendental Lord (Brahm) residing in his own bosom as his true self (as pure conscious Atma), he would behave accordingly. So, when someone speaks ill of him, or speaks to him with words that are rough, insulting and generally unwarranted, or on the contrary even speaks good of him and say comforting nice words to him, he would remain steady, composed and calm with stoic equanimity in both the cases. He would not at all be affected either by the uncalled for words and insinuations and lose his poise and calm, nor would he feel elated and proud at being praised and spoken good of. In both the cases he would remain completely indifferent to, unruffled by and unconcerned with what is being said. [This is because he knows that the Lord is speaking to him—scolding him for his wrongs, errors and shortcomings, or testing his patience, resilience and resolve, or lauding him for his goodness and virtuousness. So he must accept everything with great humility, for therein lies his greatness and proof of his exalted and enlightened state of existence.] [20 ½].

The creation at the microcosmic level of the individual creature is said to be of three kinds—viz. Vishwa, Taijas and Pragya¹. The same creation at the macrocosmic level of the universe is said to be also of three kinds—viz. Viraat, Hiranyagarbha and Ishwar². The created world, i.e. the gross world, is similarly of three kinds—viz. Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha³ [22].

All the various aspects of creation have unfolded from one basic source (the Bindu)⁴, and when the time comes for conclusion and folding up of the world, they would naturally revert to their original and basic form from which they had sprouted in the beginning. [This single source is the supreme entity known as Brahm.] That is, when things are seen in the correct perspective and analysed with intelligent application of the mind, all extraneous appearances vanish and only the basic oneness of the entire edifice of creation is visible. In other words, when the world comes to a conclusion, it would merge and become indistinguishable from the egg-like primordial source from which it had emerged [23]. (20-23).

[Note—¹The Vishwa refers to the gross body of the creature, i.e. his sense organs of perception and action which makes him aware of the external material and artificial world during his waking state; the Taijas refers to the subtle body of the creature, i.e. the mind-intellect complex that is active in his dreaming state of consciousness when the external physical world has ceased to exist but the mind still conjures up a colourful picture of the world in the dream and keeps itself as well the consciousness as active in it as in the physical world; and Pragya is causal body of the creature, i.e. the deep sleep state of consciousness when the mind has also ceased to exist.

²Similarly, the three levels of existence at the macro level of creation are called respectively Viraat, Hiranyagarbha and Ishwar. The word Viraat refers

to the gross body of the cosmic consciousness that is vast and all-incorporating ('Viraat') and forms the sum total of all the gross bodies that exist at the micro level of creation; the Hiranyagarbha, literally the golden egg of the creation, refers to the subtle body of this Viraat from which the latter has emerged; and Ishwar is the macro level counterpart of the causal body of the creature, i.e. it represents the causal body of the Viraat and the sum total of all the causal bodies in creation.

Since the 'body' must have some living entity residing in it, it follows that this 'someone' or 'some living entity' is different from the body and it uses the body merely as its habitat or dwelling. This 'living entity' is known as the supreme transcendental consciousness called the Atma of the individual at the micro level of creation, and Brahm at the macro level. It is 'transcendental' because it goes beyond the limitations and definitions of the gross or subtle body. Since Brahm is the 'cause' of the entire creation coming into being, the inner chamber of the body where it lives is called 'causal'—one that causes something to happen. The counterpart of Brahm in the creature's body is the Atma. It is called 'consciousness' simply because it is the only truly living entity in the otherwise entirely inert and inane gross body made up of different elements which are themselves lifeless and lack any inherent consciousness in them besides being perishable and comparatively gross as compared to the pure Consciousness. Since the living being shows all signs of life and consciousness, since it has emotions and feelings, it is more akin to this Atma than it is to the gross inert body. This fact is acknowledged when the scriptures assert and affirm that the true nature and identity of the creature is the Atma and not the body in which this Atma lives.

Taking the example of this material world, physical science tells us that everything has a visible structure that depends upon molecules which themselves are formed by arrangement of atoms in different permutations and combinations. The atoms also have a world of their own, with the electrons circulating the central nucleus consisting of the protons and the neutrons. When we apply this theory to metaphysical understanding of creation, we can draw a parallel and deduce that the visible physical world is the gross body of Brahm, the molecules are the subtle body, and the atom is the causal body. The nucleus of the atom without which the atom—and therefore the entire edifice of the material world dependent upon this atom—would cease to have an existence is the Brahm of Vedanta. This would be the macrocosmic view of creation. Its microcosmic partner would be the atom itself—with its rounded structure being the gross body, the component of the electrons, neutrons and protons etc. being its subtle body, while the nucleus itself would be causal body which houses the neutrons, protons and other sub-atomic forces that regulate the functioning of the edifice of the atom as a whole.

³The seeds of the three worlds that would come into existence were encrypted in the three words that the creator Brahma had pronounced at the time of creation. They were—'Bhu' from which was created the mortal world represented by earth and its inhabitants, 'Bhuvaha' from which the space above the earth was created, i.e. the world of the sky where birds as well as Spirits etc. would live, and 'Swaha' represented the heavens where the Gods would have their abode. Therefore, these three words are the seeds from which the huge tree of this creation came into existence.

In the context of what has been said in note 1 and 2 above, the Bhu would correspond to the gross body of creation, Bhuvaha to the subtle body, and Swaha to the causal body, while the supreme Brahm would be the one who pronounced these words to initiate the process in the beginning.

⁴This phenomenon can be best understood with the example of the huge tree with numerous big and small branches with their leaves, multicolored flowers, succulent fruits and hordes of birds, insects et al that find their temporary perch or permanent abode on it. The entire tree has had its origin in one single seed that is minuscule as compared to the size of the tree. This seed is like the 'Brahmaand' or universe in a miniature form, while the tree itself is the unfolded universe with its astounding variety and an astonishing array of multifaceted characteristics. When someone wishes to know the fundamental truth about the origin of this colourful tree, he would obviously come to conclusion that it is the seed. Similarly, when one goes deeper and deeper and sees the basic unit from which this edifice called the universe has emerged he would finally come to the conclusion that it is the microscopic Atma known as cosmic consciousness or Brahm. This is essentially the philosophy of the non-dual nature of the creation and the basis of Vedantic canons.

We can take another example to understand this phenomenon of the world having its origin in one single source—the 'dot', the Bindu, and then extending to reveal itself in its full bloom and vibrancy, and finally retracing itself back into the dot or the 'self' from where it had started out in the beginning on its journey of adventure should it wish to find its place of origin. Suppose one wishes to draw a line on a paper. The first point where the pen touches the paper is the metaphoric 'dot' or Bindu, and this is then stretched to become a line of whatever length one wishes. Can anyone draw a line without first making a dot? So it is safely deduced that the line is actually an extension of the single dot or Bindu, that the line consists of uncountable number of dots that add up to appear in the form of the line, and that the dot or Bindu is the parent-source of the entire line. When this 'stretched dot' known as the line ever wishes to retrace its step and find its source of origin, it is obvious that it would come back to the point called the dot which was made when the tip of the pen had first touched the paper. Similarly, if the line wishes to know its true nature it would discover that it is nothing but a series of dots.

Every modern man who has encountered the computer with its astounding and stupendous abilities knows the basic fact that the machine works on a series of zeros and ones; it knows no other language except the zero and the digit one. Likewise, a wise and enlightened man knows nothing else except the Atma and Brahm. The entire edifice of creation revolves around these two units as far he is concerned. But does this mean that there is duality? No, never, for he learns that the Atma and Brahm are the same entities at different planes of existence, the former at the micro level of existence and the latter at the macro level of existence.]

“Verse no. 27-28 = Essentially the Atma is inherently wise and enlightened, but when it assumes a gross body to live in, it comes under the corrupting and tainting influence of Maya (ignorance-induced delusions). Consequentially, this Atma begins to imagine that it has the three states of existence in this world—the Jagrat (waking state), the Swapna (dreaming state) and Sushupta (deep sleep state)¹. With this faulty thinking, it becomes a victim of the bad influences of Maya.

When the good effects of his numerous past lives (here meaning ‘when he is fortunate to have come in contact with wise men and has had the opportunity to study or hear the scriptures’ that) create a conducive environment that fosters right thinking, breeds wisdom and inculcates the desire to know the truth and analyse the situation threadbare, the man begins to wonder what his faults were that had led him into this quagmire of birth and death in the first place, given the fact that his ‘true self’, the Atma, is supposed to be free from life and death, and that it has no physical body. Then why has he come to such a sorry state of existence? He ponders on the eternal spiritual question—‘who am I, what are my shortcomings or faults, and how come I have come to live in this gross world’? (27-28).

“Verse no. 29 = ‘During the waking and dreaming states of existence, it appears that I am doing so many things. But what happens during the deep sleep state?’ [During the waking state, the man does so many things with his gross body in this physical world, while in the dreaming state it is the subtle mind that makes him do so many things in the imaginary world of dreams. That is why in both the cases the man is doing something or the other—whether real or imaginary. But in the deep sleep state of existence, the mind becomes defunct, and consequentially there is no activity inspite of the fact that the consciousness does exist in the same body and radiates in it. This is proved by the fact the body does not die, and all its internal functions—such as the working of all its internal organs as the heart, liver, bladder, kidneys, lungs etc.—continue uninterrupted during this deep sleep state as if the man was awake and active. So what is that which lives in this state of deep sleep?]

This question haunts him and he keeps on contemplating upon its answer. [And upon deep analysis and study of the scriptures he comes to the conclusion that the entity which remains alive and active during this phase of deep sleep is called the ‘consciousness’, and it is this entity that is his true ‘self’.] (29).

“Verse no. 30 = Even as a bale of cotton is reduced to ashes immediately on contact with fire, the worldly ignorance and its attendant delusions are eliminated as soon as the light of wisdom and enlightenment emanating from the pure consciousness lightens up the inner self of the man. This ends all his torments and miseries pertaining to ignorance, delusions and the world (30).

“Verse no. 31-32 = In this way, when the darkness of ignorance that this gross material world and its delusions are metaphors for are eliminated by the light of true knowledge and wisdom, its place is taken over by the brilliant light representing this truthful knowledge and wisdom. And this knowledge is about the self-illuminated Atma which is pure and uncorrupted, which is untainted and immaculate, which is eternal and truthful, and which is Consciousness personified. [When the world is eliminated, it implies that the gross body consisting of the gross organs of perception and action is also eliminated. These gross organs are the five organs of perception—ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin, and the five organs of action—hand, leg, mouth, anus and genital. It is through these that the Atma interacts with the world during the waking state of existence. Their removal from sight means that for all practical purposes the physical gross world has been done away with.]

This true knowledge and wisdom are the torch bearers of enlightened state of existence. It removes every trace of darkness and veils of all kinds that cover

the glorious light of the Atma and prevent its shine from coming out. True knowledge also enlightens the creature about his distinct identity which is separate from the gross body called the Anna Maya Kosh consisting of the organs of perception and action, as well as the subtle body consisting of the vital winds called the Pran Maya Kosh and the mind-intellect complex called the Mana (mind) and Vigyan (intellect). Therefore, since the creature's 'true self or true identity' is the pure conscious Atma, it follows that both the gross and the subtle components of his existence are eliminated if one were to trace this 'true' identity. [When the creature is asleep, he dreams. During this stage of his existence, the outside body is asleep but the mind and its sub-conscious remain as active as before. The intellect was active when the man was awake in this world and was thinking actively, but it has a hidden role to play here in the dreaming world as well because it is the intellect that decides what the man would remember and learn that forms the basis of the data stored in the mind in the form of memory which his sub-conscious relies upon during dreams. So by erasing or eliminating the role of the mind and intellect altogether, the subtle body which covers the Atma is also removed.]

With the removal of these two bodies that had been covering the Atma like the clay pot covering the lighted lamp (as described in verse no. 15-16 and 25), it is obvious that the light of the Atma would shine through and illuminate the entire inner self of the spiritual aspirant just like the light of the lamp lighting up the surrounding area after removal of the clay pot covering it (31-32).

There is another way of interpreting the three levels of existence as done in the Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 8. It outlines the three fundamental levels in which the creation exists along with the function that are carried out by the units of that particular level. To quote—

“All the different elements or individual units of consciousness that makes the creature aware of the world, interact with it, be charmed with it and remember it even while he sleeps (i.e. during the dreaming state) withdraw themselves (during the third state of consciousness called the deep sleep or Sushupta) and come to rest or retire in the Atma.

These elements that constitute the body of the creature are divided into the following categories—

[The five principal Bhuts or elements of creation.] (i) The earth and its perception in the form of smell (as all things that have the earth element as their ingredient have a natural tendency to emit a fragrance or smell, whether pleasant or otherwise); (ii) the water and its perception in the form of taste (because to taste anything the secretions of the taste buds need some fluid medium for its enzymes to interact with the chemicals in the thing tasted so as to create the sense of taste); (iii) the sky and its perception in the form of sound (because the sound waves need space to travel and the medium of the air to be generated and transmitted in the form of waves); (iv) the wind and its perception in the form of touch (as is evident when we can feel the soft touch of the breeze blowing against the face even though no one can see the wind); (v) the fire and light (collectively called Tej) and their perception in the form of shape and form (because only visible things can be seen, and the fire provides the light to make it visible along with the energy for enabling the creature to be alive and see things—here the reference is to the sun in whose light the entire world assumes a definitive shape and form to enable it to be seen).

[The five principal organs of perception and their respective functions.] (vi) The eye and its perception in the form of sight (because it is only the eye amongst the various organs that is exclusively empowered to see anything); (vii) the ear and its perception in the form of hearing (because it is only the ear amongst the various organs that is exclusively empowered to hear sounds emanating from anything); (viii) the nose and its perception in the form of smell (because it is only the nose amongst the various organs that is exclusively empowered to smell anything); (ix) the tongue and its perception in the form of taste (because it is only the tongue amongst the various organs that is exclusively empowered to taste anything); (x) the skin and its perception in the form of touch or the sense of feeling (because it is only the skin amongst the various organs that is exclusively empowered to feel or touch anything).

[The five principal gross organs of action and their respective functions.] (xi) The hand and its function in the form of accepting or receiving anything worthy of accepting or receiving; (xii) the ability to speak and its function to speak about subjects worthy of speaking; (xiii) the genital and its function in the form of reproduction and sexual enjoyment; (xiv) the anus and its function in the form of expelling wastes from the body (which is stool); (xv) the leg and its function in the form of taking the creature or the other organs of the body to their desired destination.

[The subtle body consists of the following organs along with their respective functions.] (xvi) The Mana (mind) and its function in the form of thinking about things or subjects worth thinking about; (xvii) the Buddhi (intellect) and its function in the form of discriminating between the good and the bad, of thinking analytically and intelligently about things or subjects worth knowing about and worth pondering, contemplating, researching, analyzing, discussing and deciding about; (xviii) the Ahankar (the sense of pride and ego) and the object that breeds it along with its result (i.e. the thing about which the creature is proud, and the collateral consequences of being proud—to be arrogant and haughty); (xix) the Chitta (sub-conscious) and its object (i.e. the things that the sub-conscious mind remembers and which constantly keep on nagging the creature; the memory bank of the mind which plays a crucial role in his dreams and the way his subjective mind thinks naturally); (xx) the Tejas (the illumination in the form of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment which are the inherent qualities of the Atma) and the things or subjects that are illuminated (known, realised and understood) with the help of the light of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment; and (xxi) Pran (the vital winds in the form of life consciousness or the vital spark of life and its evident signs in the creature) and all the elements or units that are dependent upon this Pran (i.e. the entire being of the creature except his pure 'self' known as the Atma).

Verily, all these units finally collapse and disappear into the Atma, the pure consciousness (8).

[Note—The relationship between the three basic units of creation—viz. the gross body that perceives or sees this world, the subtle body through which this perception takes place, and the actual perceiver, the Atma, can be understood with the help of a simple parable. Once a teacher asked his disciple—'Son, do you see anything?' The disciple answered—'Yes sir, I see'. The teacher—'By what light do you see?' The disciple—'Sir, by the light of the sun in the sky during the day time, and by the light of the lamp during the night'. The teacher—'By what light do you see these lights?' The disciple—'Sir, by the light present in my eyes'. The teacher—'By what light is the eye enabled to see?' The disciple—'Sir, by the light provided by the mind'. The

teacher—‘By what light do you know the mind, or what lights up your mind and enables it to see and interpret the sight?’ The disciple—‘Sir, by the light provided by my self, for no one else outside can empower my mind to think for me’. The teacher—‘Well, there you are. You are the light of lights’. The enlightened disciple exulted—‘Yes indeed sir, that is I; that indeed is me’.]

The *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 24 is very explicit in explaining these three states of existence of consciousness. To quote—”The same eclectic divine entity called the pure consciousness which is the ‘truthful self’ of the aspirant is known as Vishwa during the Jagrat state, as Taijas during the Swapna state, and as Pragya during the Sushupta state. Depending upon these three states of existence in which the consciousness lives at a particular moment, the same entity is given different names and exhibits different characteristics. Though the person is the same, he is known by different names and given different titles depending upon his different roles in life. [For instance, a man is a father for his son, a husband for his wife, a lord and master for his servant and vice-versa, a teacher for his student, a caring king for his subjects, and enemy for other kings, and so on and so forth.]

One can come to learn about the state of one’s mind, thoughts and level of his spiritual existence by carefully examining the actions or deeds that are being done by him at any given moment. [For instance, if a man is mentally upset the way he handles any situation would be different as compared to his behaviour when his mind is composed. If a man gets mentally involved in the affairs of this material world and remains deeply involved in it, he is bound to be restless and in a state of constant flux. This would indicate his ‘Vishwa’ state of spiritual existence. On the other hand, if he physically remains doing something but does it in a mechanical manner while his mind is thinking of something else as is the case with some students in a classroom who cannot concentrate on the subject taught in the class because though they might be physically present there but their mind is focused somewhere else. This is the typical case of Taijas—the state of existence which is like a dream when a man does not live in the reality of the existing world and instead lives in an imaginary world which has no relevance to the present. Finally, there is a state when a man is so focused on the job at hand that no external inputs can disturb the composure of his mind and its ability to concentrate though he is very much awake and not even day-dreaming. This is called the Pragya state when pure wisdom, erudition, learning and enlightenment are the dominant factors, the key players.]”

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 7 describes the third state of existence of consciousness, called the Sushupta or deep sleep state. Now let us see what it says—The ‘sleeping state’ during which the person does not desire/wish to enjoy any of the objects of this materialistic world and is neither conscious of their existence, a state when he does not even dream of any imaginary non-existent world—such a state of existence of consciousness is called ‘Sushupta’ or the deep sleep state of consciousness. This state is beyond the dream state, and is the third state in the hierarchy of existences in which the Atma or the pure consciousness lives. It corresponds to the third Paad or limb or aspect of the supreme Brahm who is the cosmic Consciousness personified.

Where the gross organs of the gross body represented by the organs of perception (eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin) and action (hand, leg, mouth, genitals and excretory), as well as the subtle organ represented by the mind, the sub-conscious and

the intellect have become defunct or stand eliminated, that eclectic state of existence of the consciousness is called Sushupta.

The body which houses this state of the Atma is called the 'causal body'. It is so-called because the Atma or pure consciousness that lives in this state is the entity that is the 'cause' of the creation of both the world of dreams in the Swapna state as well as the world of material sense objects during the Jagrat state. During this Sushupta state of consciousness, the entire world, both the real as well as the imaginary, coalesce and merge into nothingness or non-being. They are now most quietly and imperceptibly shrunk into the entity that was the 'cause' of their existence at all in the first place. That is why it is called the 'causal' body.

The wise entity that was empowered with the knowledge that enabled it to create something and then sustain it is called 'Pragya'. It lives in this causal body. This Pragya is none other than the Atma or the pure consciousness, also called the 'true self' of the creature. This Atma of the individual is the microcosmic counterpart of the cosmic Atma of creation. At the individual level of the creature, it is called 'Pragya', while the same entity in its macrocosmic level is called 'Ishwar'—or the supreme Lord. It is 'Lord' as it is the central Authority that not only determines the existence of both the worlds—the Swapna as well as the Jagrat—but presides over them, enjoys what they have to offer or suffers from them, and then decides when to get rid of them.

This state of Sushupta is indicative of the dissolution of creation as nothing then remains. Then two options are available—either the Atma reverts back to the earlier two states of existence, or proceed ahead to the fourth state of Turiya which is actually a permanent state of Sushupta.

The entity living in the causal body and known as Pragya is one of its kinds; it has no duality and no parallels. It is an image of eternal bliss, beatitude and felicity, and it is wise, enlightened, realised and truthful. It is this entity that enjoys this world of eternal bliss and tranquility. It is pure consciousness and enlightenment personified. These virtues are its 'mouth', i.e. it accepts anything using these virtues as its accepting organs. In other words, it judges the world using the yardstick of enlightened consciousness, and not the way the mind had been judging it previously. The mind has a tendency to 'fly' in the vast sky of imagination, while the intellect 'moves' on sound ground of logic and rationality. Wisdom and erudition weighs everything and makes the creature aware that what he believes to be real is actually false and misleading. This is the function of the enlightened Atma. Once the sun of wisdom and enlightenment dawns on the creature's spiritual horizon, he finds immense peace and tranquility because all ghosts and phantoms arising in the darkness created by delusions and ignorance are eliminated for good.

In terms of Vedanta, the causal body encloses the Atma which is surrounded by the bliss sheath. When this Atma is not disturbed by constant interference by the mind and the intellect, it remains oblivious of the outside world, and being comfortably ensconced in the bliss sheath, it remains blissful and peaceful.

This Pragya (wise, enlightened, knowledgeable, erudite and sagacious) aspect of the Atma, which is pure consciousness, is the symbolic third Paad or limb or aspect of Brahm.

[The Atma or the soul of the creature is trapped in a body having these three layers of the body that are like sheaths that surround the soul—the gross body (verse no. 5), the subtle body (verse no. 6) and the causal body (verse no. 7). As soon as these are dissolved or removed or done away with, the Atma enjoys a state of merger with the eternal Atma of the cosmos. Or in other words, the individual Atma of the

creature becomes one with the Parmatma, the supreme transcendental Atma. This Parmatma is also known as the Supreme Being, the supreme Brahm, and the cosmic Consciousness in the form of the cosmic Soul of creation.] (7)."

The *Annapurna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 52; Canto 2, verse nos. 12-13, and Canto 3, verse nos. 17-18 describe the concept of Sushupta as follows—

"Canto 1, verse no. 52 = The Sushupta state (or the 'deep sleep state') of consciousness is on the threshold of the Turiya state; it precedes the Turiya state and is very close to it.

When the Mana (mind) and Ahankar (ego, pride) dissolve (i.e. when both the mind that harbours ego, and the ego that influences the working of the mind, are made ineffective, are neutralized) it is then that the aspirant is said to have reached the Sushupta state.

[The Sushupta state of existence is the deep sleep state that comes after the Swapna or dreaming state of consciousness. In this state the mind and the sub-conscious are both defunct. The difference between the Sushupta and Turiya states is that the creature reverts to the Swapna state from the Sushupta state, but when he reaches the Turiya state this reversal does not happen. That is why the Turiya state is likened to Samadhi while the Sushupta state isn't.] (52)."

"Canto 2, verse nos. 12-13 = The state of the Chitta (sub-conscious mind; the ability of the mind to pay attention and remember events) when it is neutral, non-active or dormant so much so that it does not register any of the constant inputs received by the mind from the external world through the medium of the sense organs of perception of the body, is said to be equivalent to being in the deep sleep state of existence, called the Sushupta state, inspite of the creature remaining awake and active in this world, the state known as Jagrat state.

In other words, when the mind and the sub-conscious become un-interested in being involved with the body and the world at large, the creature finds the same peace and rest that he would find when he is sleeping peacefully without a worry in the world.

[The deep sleep state is when the mind is defunct; it ceases to function. The waking state is when the mind is fully active and the creature is actively involved in the world. So, in the situation when the mind fails to register what is happening around it, when it becomes uninterested in what the body does, it would be equivalent to the mind being in a virtual deep sleep state. It is said that the creature finds true rest and peace in the deep sleep state or the Sushupta state because both the physical body as well as the mind are resting. In the present context, the creature finds rest because the mind had stopped nagging him and can peacefully enjoy the nectar of bliss that drips from the realisation of the consciousness residing in his inner-self, in his bosom.] (12).

Oh Nidagh! The subtle Sushupta state of the mind and sub-conscious (when they are inactive and defunct for all practical purposes even though the creature might be physically awake as described in verse no. 12 above) is achieved and made steady by constant practice.

When the Sushupta state is ripe and perpetual, it is known as the 'Turiya' state. This is what those who are experts in the essence of metaphysics assert (13)."

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 5, verse no. 11 says that the same Atma, the pure consciousness, prevails in all the three states of existence, viz. the Jagrat, the Swapna and the Sushupta. It is only when the Atma crosses these three states and enters the fourth state (i.e. the Turiya state) that it can find final and full liberation and deliverance.

The fact that the Atma continues to oscillate between the three states of Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupta has been elaborately explained in the (i) Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 16-18, 34-35; and (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahm/Amrit Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 11; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse nos. 12-14; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 93/12-93/15; Brahm Upanishad, verse nos. 20-21.

(d) Then comes the 4th state of existence of the Atma, and it is known as *Turiya* state. This state is reached when the third state becomes a perpetual phenomenon instead of being only a temporary phase. Once this state of Turiya is reached then even though the man might wake from sleep and appears to be going about his normal duties in a routine manner in this world, his pure consciousness remains aloof and distanced from the sense organs of perception and actions as well as from the mind. This is the 'transcendental state' of existence of consciousness, and it goes beyond the third state of Sushupta or deep sleep state of consciousness. Here the spiritual aspirant lives in a state of perpetual Samadhi. That is, he remains in a constant state of blissfulness and meditation though he lives in this physical world and goes about his normal affairs like an ordinary man.

During this 4th state called 'Turiya', the Atma acquires all the characters of the earlier three stages, viz. the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleeping states in their individual form as well as in a combined and composite way. In this state of spiritual existence, the consciousness exhibits all the traits of the earlier three states at the same time along with the unique traits which would obviously be a net result of the combined affect of all the individual traits that are so unique to each of the three earlier states of existence consciousness—viz. the waking state, the dreaming state, and the deep sleep state.

The 4th state of existence of the consciousness or Atma is also called the 'Turiya Chaitanya state'. In this state, the creature exists in its purest form as the pure consciousness which is undiluted, uninterrupted and unpolluted by any impulses or inputs from the external world. This results in its pristine and immaculate form as 'consciousness' to shine through (much like the flame of the candle which shines with all its brightness and splendour once the tainted glass covering around it is removed). This consciousness is the true 'self' of the creature and its real identity.

Thus, it is the Atma or the pure consciousness as the true 'self' of the creature that is the witness of the existence of the other three states in which the creature lives. This 'self' or Atma is imperishable and without a birth or beginning. This is because the other three states continue to appear and disappear in a rhythmic cycle as the creature wakes up to face the world after his phase of sleep is over, only to go back to sleep again when it is exhausted, and wake up again refreshed and rejuvenated from sleep. But the fourth state is like the Sun in the sky which is steady and shines constantly upon the world and lights it up. This Sun is unaffected by anything happening in this world and to this world, and remains completely dispassionate and detached from anything mundane and terrestrial. Nights and days appear and disappear in a cyclic manner, but the Sun remains the same. During the night it is

erroneously assumed that the Sun is no more, but as science has proved the Sun is there in the sky though it might not be visible to the creature during that period of time called the 'night' as it is shining on the outer side of the globe. The day is comparable to the waking state of consciousness, the moon-light night to the dreaming state of consciousness when a man is able to see this world but with a different light, while the dark night when nothing is visible is comparable to the deep sleep state of consciousness when nothing of the external world is visible.

The Turiyateet state of existence has been elaborately described also in Atharva Veda's *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse no. 4.

The *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 21 describes the Turiya state as follows—

“To remain deeply engrossed in the thoughts of the pure consciousness which is the true self of the spiritual seeker, meditating upon it to the exclusion of all other things, is known as the Turiya state of existence. This is therefore the transcendental state of existence of the creature.

If the inner-self is likened to the Sun, the esoteric and mystical entity that lends this Sun its power to give brilliant light, energy and heat, which gives the Sun its glorious dynamism, is known as 'Hans'. [In other words, it is the self-illuminated Atma hidden invisibly inside the dark gross body of the creature that inspires the latter and lights up his world for him just like the celestial ball known as the 'Sun' is illuminated and made incandescent from the inside by the nuclear reaction taking place in its core which supplies the ball of the Sun with its light and heat, or its 'fire'. This Atma which is self-illuminated and which lends its 'light', or consciousness that translates into 'life' of the creature, is known as Hans.]

The *Annapurna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse nos. 107, 108-112 elucidates upon the chief characteristic features of the Turiya state of existence as follows—

“Verse no. 107 = Do not harbour thoughts that a particular thing is truthful, good and auspicious, and the other is not. Become totally dispassionate and neutral towards everything. Develop equanimity and train your mind to remain even, calm, serene, detached and steady under all circumstances.

A person who has developed and practices such high level of detachment and dispassion is the one who lives a life in the Turiya state. That is, he lives a life of transcendental existence by rising above mundane and gross considerations, and instead dwelling at a sublime plane of existence. He is able to translate the theoretical aspects of Turiya state of existence of consciousness into a practical way of life.

[That is, in spite of living in a gross world and allowing his body to do the necessary things as expected of him, he remains aloof from and untainted by any of the things of this gross world and its numerous deluding temptations.] (107).

“Verse no. 109 = The Turya (i.e. the transcendental) state of exalted existence is neither the Jagrat state (or waking state) nor the Swpana state (or dreaming state)—because during the Turiya state there is no trace of any kind of Sankalps at all. [The Sankalps are the various volitions, vows, firm desires and determinations that a creature makes in relation to the gross world and its numerous sense objects as well as various achievements and fulfillments that are to be attained in this world. This

situation prevails only as long as the creature is aware of the world; he desires fruits that accrue to him by voluntarily getting involved in doing various deed with an avowed aim of attaining success in fulfilling his desires in this world. When the mind and the sub-conscious become defunct during the Turiya state of existence, the world and its material attractions simply cease to exist and matter. For all practical purposes, a creature who has reached the transcendental state of Turiya is as good as dead vis-à-vis the world. He neither is concerned with the physical world that prevails in the Jagrat or waking state, or the imaginary world that exists in the Swapna or dreaming state.]

The Turiya state is not even the Sushupta state of existence (i.e. the deep sleep state) because in the latter case the creature lies like a gross and lifeless log of wood. [During the Sushupta state he neither thinks nor imagines. Since the mind is defunct, he does not perceive anything of the world, he does not have to apply his intelligence either to analyse them and make deductions and choices. At the same time, his sub-conscious is asleep, so that he does not even file away any sort of information in his memory bank for future referral either. But the Turiya state is not lifeless and gross like the condition that prevails during the Sushupta state—for in the Turiya state he is very much alert and active, but this is limited to his physical body and that aspect of the mind that is concerned with routine mundane affairs. His inner-self, his sub-conscious and subtle mind is not at all involved in what his physical body does and remain immune to all the sensory impulses gathered by the sense organs of perception. So in effect it means that he would appear to be going about his life in a routine manner like other compatriots, but internally he is neither involved nor aware of anything. Thus, he is peaceful and calm inspite of being surrounded by the torrent of existential problems in this world.] (109).

“Verse no. 110 = Those who are of a calm, controlled and stable mind, temperament and demeanours, those who are truly wise, enlightened, sagacious and erudite see the physical world in which they live in the same way that they would see it in a Truiya (transcendental) state of existence.

[That is, they do not get involved in anything related to this gross world of deluding material charms; they do not allow their inner-self to be at all influenced by any of the tainting and deluding effects of the world despite living in it in an ordinary manner and participating in its activities in a normal manner; they do not get entangled in anything in this world, and remain aloof and distanced from them at all levels of existence, viz. the emotional, the sentimental, the intellectual, as well as both the active and subtle levels of the mind which includes the sub-conscious.

They do not shun the world and run away from their duties and responsibilities, but their inner-self remains fully anchored to the peace and tranquility that such wise and enlightened men have acquired for themselves. They are not affected by the world in the least; they do not lose their calm and poise under any circumstance; they treat the world and its material sense objects as being virtually non-existent at the level of their mind and sub-conscious. Thus, it really does not matter to them whether or not the world exists, whether or not they interact with it or perform various deeds in it.

They have realised that it is the gross body that actually lives and comes in contact with the equally gross world, and that their ‘true self’ is not the body but the pure conscious Atma which is immaculate and independent of both the body and the world. It is the body that does deeds and interacts with the body, it is the body that either suffers or enjoys the material charms and pleasures of the world, and not the

Atma. The world is transient, unsteady, changing and perishable like the body, but the Atma is unlike them both. So, a wise man lives in a transcendental state of Turiya all the time. He treats the world and everything else with marked stoic neutrality, indifference, detachment and dispassion. His calmness and composure is never disturbed or affected.]

On the other hand is a man who is ignorant and deluded. He treats this body as his 'self' and this world as true. Therefore, he is submerged in this ever-changing and unfaithful world that is as deluding and entrapping, is tossed and kicked around by its surging waves of miseries and torments, and is made miserable and restless by the body's never-ending demands and sufferings. He loses his peace and calmness; he is never steady and composed (110).

"Verse no. 111 = When all Ahankar (pride and ego) is extinguished, when one develops a high degree of equanimity, fortitude and neutrality as well as an evenness of mind and demeanours, and when all the mischief, restlessness and wayward tendencies of the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) are reined in—it is then the creature is said to have achieved the Turiya (transcendental) state of existence (111).

"Verse no. 112 = It is an unequivocal opinion or proclamation of all the scriptures that when all Maya (delusions) and Avidya (ignorance) are eliminated, what remains is indeed the Truth. It corresponds to the transcendental supreme state of existence which is absolutely calm, peaceful, composed, serene and tranquil, as well as the state when there is no perplexity, consternation, confusion, bewilderment and doubt. This state is verily the exalted state of Brahm-realisation (112)."

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 64, describes what the practical implication of this Turiya state of consciousness is. To quote—

"Verse no. 64 = The dream that is long lasting is the cause of all hallucinations and delusory perceptions of the world. It takes a man away from the reality. Hence, a man who drags on his imaginary world of dreams which are shorn of any reality into the real world never finds happiness no matter how hard he tries. [For instance, if a man begins to 'day dream', if he does not get back to his routine daily life after waking up from sleep and continues to brood over things seen in the dream though he knows fully well that he is wasting his time by such thoughts as they were mere dreams and have no relevance in practical life, then such a man is deemed to be 'mentally ill'. He would never find peace because what he sees in practice has no relevance to what he saw in his dreams. For example, if a man dreams that he is a king rolling in worldly comforts and pleasures while actually he is manual labourer, and if he carries this dream into his practical life, it is clearly obvious that he will never find peace. He would be perpetually depressed and become a mental wreck. Besides this, the very fact that he saw a dream of being a king shows that he has harboured a hidden desire of being a king, because dreams are a replay of the sub-conscious mind. How can desires that are obviously impractical to be ever fulfilled give peace? They would, on the contrary, snatch whatever peace the man had.]

Similarly, the material world of sense objects in which a man allows his mind to remain engrossed in for a prolonged time also becomes the cause of all his pains and agonies (much like the case of carrying over the dreams into the practical life).

So a wise, erudite and enlightened man should realise the benefits of the Sushupta state of existence when there is great peace and bliss, and endeavour to emulate this state even during the waking state of existence in this world. In other words, when he has woken up from the deep sleep state of consciousness into the waking state, he should remember only Brahm as the pure cosmic Consciousness, as the universal Truth, as the one eternal source of infinite bliss and peace that can give eternal calmness and tranquility that the man had experienced during the deep sleep state of Sushupta. [This is also called the ‘Turiya state of consciousness’. This he can achieve by controlling the mind and preventing it from becoming engrossed in this world. He uses the mind in a routine manner and does not allow it to register anything in its sub-consciousness. This will pre-empt any dreams and mental aberrations.] (64).”

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 8 describes the fourth state of existence of consciousness, called the Turiya or the state that transcends the Sushupta state. Now let us see what it says—

“The supreme Atma or Consciousness that exists beyond the third state of Sushupta, i.e. that state of consciousness which transcends the earlier three states related to this world, is said to be the fourth Paad or aspect of Brahm. It is called the Turiya state.

The Atma that exists in this fourth state called the Turiya or transcendental state is the one that is said to be the creator or progenitor of the other three states. [When the pure consciousness decides that it wishes to interact with the world, it would have to retrace the path followed by it to reach this higher spiritual state of Turiya—i.e. it would have to pass through all the three stages mentioned in verse no. 5-7. But if it decides to get rid of the world and find eternal peace, it will not do so. Then in such a case, the person who has reached this fourth state of consciousness, called the Turiya, would remain in this world like other men do, but would be a totally changed and transformed man—he would be totally immune to this world and its charms and temptations, as well as its pains, miseries and sufferings. He would seem to be awake and going about his normal duties, but internally he would be in the state of deep sleep, not at all being aware of or interested in what the body, both its gross components as well as its subtle components, do. He would be virtually ‘sleep walking’ as far as the world is concerned. All the characteristics that are enumerated below in this verse are of the Turiya state of consciousness.]

The Atma in this Turiya or fourth state of existence is called the ‘Parmatma’ or the supreme Atma—for now it is not an ordinary Atma of the creature that is affected by the deluding influences of the world, but beyond such considerations. It is also known as the ‘Ishwar’ or the Lord of the creation—for now it has reached the state when it no longer relates its self with the mundane world of material sense objects, it does not wish its comforts and pleasures, but has risen high up to occupy a much exalted stature that makes it ‘superior’ to all the rest in creation. Such a high Atma is Parmatma and it is also the Ishwar or Lord of creation. It is called ‘Ishwar’ because it is the undisputed Lord of all that exists. It is this Atma that has not only created everything but also enjoys them and eliminates them should it want to do so. In other words, if a wise man so wishes and is firmly determined, then he can easily forgo the attractions of the world in a moment by just making a firm decision that he is not interested in them. This world exists only because the Atma, or the consciousness which is the ‘true self’ of a creature, wishes it to exist.

[According to Vedanta, Ishwar represents the sum-total of all the causal bodies in this creation. This is because Ishwar is the ‘cause’ of coming into being of whatever that exists in this creation. Anything, no matter how inconsequential and miniscule, that has an existence owes its presence to the Ishwar. It is like the case of line or any other figure drawn on a piece of paper. Its origin is in the first ‘dot’ that was formed when the tip of the pen had first touched the paper. The line or the figure is merely an extension of this dot. If the line is retracted and seeks its original point it will come back to this dot. If there is no dot, the line cannot be drawn. Similarly, everything in this world has its origin in this single ‘Ishwar’, and the rest is simply an extension of this Ishwar.]

The supreme macrocosmic Atma, the cosmic Consciousness, is the Soul or essence or the Tattwa of creation, and like its counterpart present in the causal body of the individual creature, it is also Pragya—i.e. it is wise, enlightened, awake, conscious, realised, intelligent, sagacious and erudite.

This Parmatma is all-knowing and omniscient as it lives inside the secret inner chambers of the creation in the form of the Atma of all the creatures. Being an ‘insider’, he knows everything; he is privy to the inner thoughts and ideas of the mind, the sub-conscious and the intellect of the creature; nothing is hidden or out of sight of him.

Being a resident inside the bosom of all the creatures in the form of their Atma, and being all-pervading, immanent and omnipresent by the virtue of it being the most subtle and sublime entity known as ‘consciousness’ in creation, this Parmatma is known as ‘Antaryaami’—one who lives inside everything and knows even that which is not known to the outside world.

Parmatma or the cosmic Atma is the cause of everything in existence—hence it is the ‘supreme Creator’. It is this Atma that is the origin of all the Bhuts (elements), their sustenance and growth, and their final resting place. [This can be easily visualized by a simple illustration. When we wish to draw any figure on paper—say a line or a circle, we use a pencil or pen which makes a ‘dot’ at the spot where it first touches the paper. This ‘dot’ is then virtually stretched in all imaginable directions on the surface of the paper to make the desired shapes visualized by the mind—whether it is a circle or a triangle. If we retrace the lines the way they were drawn, we come back to the original dot. This symbolically depicts the way the creation is regressed.]

Since the Parmatma (Supreme Being) is ‘consciousness’ itself personified, it follows that he does not need any other thing to be the cause of his own origin—simply because it is ‘consciousness’ that makes ‘life’ possible in creation, it is ‘consciousness’ that magically transforms a lifeless gross body into an active and vigorous creature. If ‘consciousness’ is removed from this world, the latter would be absolutely worthless and lifeless. Left to its own accord, this world would not be able to remain alive or revive its self in case ‘consciousness’ decides to abandon it. This quintessential factor of life in this creation is known as the ‘Atma’.

The cosmic Atma or the cosmic Consciousness is a complete neutral entity and characterized by paradoxes. For instance, it is neither introvert nor extrovert. It is an embodiment and a fount of wisdom, erudition, enlightenment, sagacity and knowledge on the one hand, but ironically the same Atma appears to exhibit the opposite virtues by allowing its self to be accompanied or engulfed by Maya (delusions) that has helped this Atma to create the world of artificiality and entrapments.

This cosmic Atma is all-knowing as well as ignorant. It is omniscient on the one hand, but remains indifferent and neutral to all forms of knowledge on the other

hand. It remains merely a mute spectator, a mere witness and a neutral observer of all that is happening around it, giving the impression that it is gross, blockhead, ignorant and dumb. Its neutral and dispassionate state is often misinterpreted in this wrong way. The neutrality of the Atma is due to the fact that it is renunciation and dispassion personified; it remains indifferent to all delusions and hallucinations that are the hallmarks of this creation. But since it has to remain in this world, it appears to be influenced by all the taints and shortcomings that characterize this world.

This state of the Atma whereby it appears to exhibit dual characteristics which lead to confusions about its truthful form and nature as a sublime and subtle entity that is free from all grossness and delusions is known as the Jagrat as well as the Swapna states of consciousness depending upon the level of grossness or subtlety exhibited by the Atma respectively. This happens because during both these two states of existence, the Atma appears to be involved headon in the affairs of the world, whether this involvement is at the physical level of the gross world as it happens during the Jagrat state, or at the subtle level as it happens during the Swapna state.

The same Consciousness is uniformly and universally present in all the creatures of creation as their Atma, and in fact the entire creation is nothing but its image, but still each individual creature is unique and different from the other. Many factors that are extraneous to the Atma—such as the characteristic attributes of the gross body, the presence of the various Gunas in different and varying proportions, the level of mental and intellectual development, the Vasanas and Vrittis (inbuilt desires and passions, as well as natural tendencies and inclinations) that an individual possesses—go collectively to make an individual unique inspite of the same Atma living in them. [A person fights others as if they were different from his own self, and there is so much diversity and dichotomy in creation that it becomes impossible to reconcile what is said in the Upanishads and what is actually observed in the practical world.]

The Atma is said to be almighty so much so that its mere wish can create and destroy the world, but ironically it requires the aid of the ‘Shakti’ or energy and power and dynamism of Nature to do anything at all. [This is best understood by the story of Ramayana itself. Lord Ram was Brahm personified, and therefore he should have killed the demon king Ravana by mere wish, instead of having to go to Lanka to do so. Then there are versions of Ramayana, such as the Adbhut Ramayana of Valmiki and Adhyatma Ramayana of Veda Vyas which tell how it was Sita, an incarnation of Brahm’s Shakti, that had actually helped the Lord accomplish the astounding deeds that he is credited for.]

This Atma is so small and subtle as well as sublime that it cannot be heard, seen, felt, touched, smelt or held. It is not an object that can be used in the conventional sense a man uses other entities of creation.

The Atma has no attributes, qualifications and dimensions that can be quantified and measured. It has never been visibly seen or observed, it has never been practically used and experimented with, and it has never been comprehended, grasped or caught either by the mind-intellect complex or by the sense organs of perception and action.

The Atma has no specific characteristics, qualities, virtues or attributes that can be used to define and qualify it. It is such a miraculous and inexplicable entity that it cannot be incorporated as a subject that can be comprehended by deep research and ponderings. It is beyond the purview of thought, imagination, intellect and conception. [That is, this supreme entity cannot be reduced to any physical matter that can be researched and experimented in a laboratory. It cannot be made a subject to be

judged by the calculating mind which has a natural tendency to reduce everything to logic and rationality.]

The Atma cannot be even indicated or represented by indirect methods, such as by the use of signs, formulas, symbolism, metaphors, similes, analogues and examples. The only holistic and comprehensive proof of its existence and truthfulness is the ethereal experience that one has upon attaining self-realisation obtained when one reaches the higher states of super conscious existence known as the state of Samadhi. It is experienced only by attained and self-realised seekers. This supreme, ethereal, divine and holy entity is completely devoid of any delusions and falsehoods, any deceit and artificiality.

The Atma cannot be comprehended as it is beyond the scope of the mind and intellect. There is nothing in existence that can be used to compare the Atma with. There is no sign that can be used to indicate anything about the Atma. The only way to know the Atma is to 'experience and witness its presence' in the form of the 'super consciousness', and other vital life-factors of existence such as the Pran (or the vital winds). [That is, if one was to search an entity known as the Atma with the help of certain characters or virtues, no matter how great and magnificent they may be, one would fail in his search. This is because the Atma is extremely subtle and sublime by nature, and it has no grossness and density whatsoever that can be perceived by the sense organs of the body, including the mind and the intellect. That is why it is said that the Atma is beyond comprehension and reach of the sense organs of the creature. However, the existence of the Atma can be experienced during higher levels of existence which are in consonance with the plane in which the Atma actually exists. It is just like the case of modern radio communication where one can listen to a particular station only when he is tuned to that frequency.]

It is absolutely calm, peaceful, serene and tranquil; it is beautiful and auspicious; it is the ultimate Truth and Reality; it is the benevolent benefactor of all and provides all auspiciousness and welfares (i.e. it is 'Shiva').

Such a unique, divine, incomprehensible and incomparable cosmic Consciousness is regarded by those who are wise and in the know of things as the 'Advaita Brahm'. This Brahm is an eternal, majestic, powerful, sublime, fascinating, almighty and stupendously magnificent entity.

[That is, the supreme entity known as Brahm has unique and apparently paradoxical characteristics enumerated here. This makes Brahm one of its kinds, because it is impossible to duplicate them. Advaita means non-dual. Hence the Brahm that is unique and without parallel is 'Advaita'. The Brahm that is uniform and universal, that is irrefutably and unequivocally one, and not two, inspite of the countless forms in which it has revealed itself in this creation—is 'Advaita'. The Brahm that is both visible as well as invisible, that is here as well as there—is known as 'Advaita Brahm'. The Brahm that is in the present as it was in the past, and would remain the same in the future—is 'Advaita Brahm'.]

Those who are well-versed in the essence of all spiritual and metaphysical knowledge, those who are blessed with wisdom and erudition of the highest order that has enabled them to have deep insight into the fundamental universal truth of everything in creation in its essential form, call this supreme transcendental Truth and the ultimate Reality of creation as 'Brahm' and the 'cosmic Atma' or 'Consciousness'. It is the fourth Paad or limb or step or form of Brahm.

In other words, the wisdom to understand what has been said of Brahm in this verse is the fourth and the last step to realise the truthful and essential nature of the supreme transcendental Brahm, about the Atma, about the pure consciousness that

exists at both the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic levels of creation at the same time. The fourth Paad of Brahm is the latter's cosmic transcendental form that goes beyond the gross and the ordinary level of the subtle that borders the gross level of existence. It corresponds to the higher level of existence of super consciousness that is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent, that is all-knowing and omniscient, that is almighty and supreme. [This fourth Paad is equivalent to the Turiya state of consciousness because it transcends the mundane and moribund existence of the Atma in this physical gross body that is bound to this physical gross world of material sense objects, thereby forcing the otherwise eternally free, ethereal, sublime and subtle Atma (the consciousness) to lead a trapped and deluded existence as long as it remains confined to this gross body and attracted to the gross world. and forced to live in and interact with.] (8)."

The *Sarwasaar Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 4 very beautifully describes the four states of existence. To quote--

"The living creature has fourteen instruments or organs in its body, such as the 'Mana' etc.¹ by which it perceives the existence of the gross external material world in the form of various stimuli emanating from the latter's sense objects. The state of consciousness which 'illuminates' the world for the creature, or makes it possible for the creature to be able to perceive the external material world of sense objects by its various sense organs much like the Sun illuminating the earth and making its objects visible, is called the creature's 'Jagrat state' or the waking state of consciousness. This is the first state of existence of the consciousness and it enables the creature to receive the world through the various sense perceptions which have their origin in the sense objects of the external world, such as the inputs of sound known as the perception of hearing etc. [The others being—the inputs of feeling known as the perception of touch, the inputs of shape, forms and colours known as the perception of sight, the inputs of various odours and fragrances that are grouped together and titillate the olfactory organs to produce the perception of smell, and the inputs of different chemicals which manifest themselves as the perception of taste.]

When the creature sleeps, the gross organs of perceptions (ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin) become inactive, and therefore the creature does not receive any impulses from the outside world. But the various 'Vasanas' or worldly passions, desires, yearnings, aspirations, greed, hopes and expectations that the creature has accumulated while in its waking state of consciousness are carried over to this state of sleeping state because though the gross body is virtually inactive, the subtle body consisting of the mind-intellect complex is very much active and agile. So, it creates its own world of imaginations, called the 'Swapna state of existence' or the dreaming state, which is often more fascinating, colourful, mysterious and majestic as well as more potent and far-reaching in its import than the physical world during the waking state of consciousness. [This is because during the waking state, the creature was constrained by the limits imposed by the grossness of the physical body, whereas during the dreaming state no such barriers exist as the interior mind and intellect are subtle instruments of the body as compared to the external organs of perceptions and actions of this body.] This is the second state of existence of the consciousness.

When the sleep progresses further, a stage is reached when the subtle mind-intellect instrument of the creature also become inactive and immune to all perceptions much like their gross cousins, the physical external organs of the gross body, and this state of consciousness is called 'Sushupta state' or the deep sleep state

of consciousness. During this state, the creature does not even dream of anything, and there is complete state of oblivion which is tantamount to bliss and peace. This is the third state of existence of the consciousness.

Finally comes the fourth state of existence of the consciousness called the 'Turiya Chaitanya state' or the transcendental state of pure conscious existence which goes beyond the third stage. In this state, the creature exists in its purest form as the pure consciousness which is undiluted, uninterrupted and unpolluted by any impulses or inputs from the external world. This results in its pristine and immaculate form as 'consciousness' to shine through (much like the flame of the candle which shines with all its brightness and splendour once the tainted glass covering around it is removed). This consciousness is the true 'self' of the creature and his real identity. Thus, it is the 'self' as pure consciousness that is the witness of the existence of the other three states of existence of the creature. This 'self' is imperishable and without a birth or beginning. [This is because the other three states continue to appear and disappear in a rhythmic cycle as the creature wakes up to face the world after his phase of sleep is over, only to go back to sleep again when it is exhausted, and wake up again refreshed and rejuvenated from sleep. But the fourth state is like the Sun in the sky which shines on the world and lights it up, making it visible to the creature. This Sun is unaffected by anything happening in and to this world, and remains completely dispassionate and detached from anything mundane and terrestrial. Nights and days appear and disappear in a cyclic manner, but the Sun remains the same. During the night it is erroneously assumed that the Sun is no more, but as science has proved the Sun is there in the sky though it might not be visible to the creature during that period of time called the 'night' as it is shining on the outer side of the globe. This 'self' is called the Kutastha of verse no. 10.]

Thus it is observed that the creature's 'self' or pure consciousness has four states of existence² (4).

[Note—¹The fourteen organs or instruments of the body by which the creature perceives the external world in which it lives are the following—one Mana or the faculty of the mind, one Buddhi or the faculty of the intellect, one Chitta or the faculty of the memory, the sub-conscious mind, and the power to focus and fix attention, one Ahankar or the sense of pride in the body and its achievements as well as its stupendous abilities, five organs of perceptions such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin, and the five organs of action such as the hand, leg, mouth, excretory and reproductive.]"

The *Kaivalya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 12-14 describes these four states as follows—

“Verse no. 12 = It is the same universal consciousness known as the Atma which has assumed the role of a deluded creature. In this role it becomes subservient to Maya or the power of creating delusions that is as integral to creation as the opposite power of enlightenment that cuts through this Maya¹.

Once the Atma has assumed the role of a deluded creature overcome by ignorance, it is known as the 'Jiva-Atma'. In this role it assumes that the body—which however is gross and perishable by nature as opposed to the subtle, sublime and imperishable nature of the pure form of the Atma—is its 'real self'. This is the basic misconception and error that he makes; this is the fundamental mistake which becomes the cause of all other misconceptions and delusions.

With this fundamental erroneous premise, the Jiva-Atma begins to do all sorts of deeds and get involved in them. [This is because the deeds are done by the physical body, and when under false impressions the Atma thinks that its ‘self’ is the body, it is natural that it gets linked to and involved with those deeds.] It enjoys the company of a woman and eats and drinks as well during its waking state called the Jagrat state of consciousness. It gets satisfaction with such service and enjoys them (12).

[Note—¹This stanza establishes that both the good and the bad co-exist in this creation. Both the opposite qualities are necessary to maintain the balance or equilibrium in creation so that the wheel cycle of creation continues to rotate. For instance, if there was no Maya or delusions and attractions towards falsehoods and material world of sense objects then all the creatures would become wise and enlightened, resulting in their non-involvement with this world and its activities. Then what would happen—there would be no generation of wealth and there would be no material progress; there would be no discoveries because people would be self-contented and satisfied with whatever they have; there would be no desire to propagate and procreate because these activities create passions and lust; etc. On the other hand, if there was no such concept as wisdom and enlightenment, no auspiciousness and righteousness, then the world would sink into the cauldron of vices and evil which in their turn would scorch the world to ashes and the creatures would beat each other to pulp even for the most unimportant of issues.

Besides the influence of Maya upon the world and the creatures that live in it there are other factors that help to maintain this balance and aid in the continuance of the turning of the wheel of creation and destruction in a perpetual manner—such as the presence of the three Gunas which are the inherent qualities present in all the creatures in more or less quantity that determine each creature’s character, temperament, behaviour, nature and personality. These three Gunas are Sata, Raja and Tama. The Sata is the best of the three qualities and creates a propensity for goodness, holiness, nobility and auspiciousness. The Raja creates a desire for the world and to remain involved in its progress, development, protection and sustenance. The Tama is the lowest of the three and creates negative tendencies such as the propensity for committing sins and misdemeanors. They also help to maintain a balance much like the presence of Maya.

From the perspective of the Atma, the Maya and the Gunas appear to affect it for the simple reason that the Atma lives in the gross body of the creature which is affected by them though the Atma itself is totally detached and independent from all them. It is like the case of the flame of a lantern that is surrounded by a tainted glass which would affect not only how the flame appears to be but also how it gives its light.

Thus, the same Atma appears to be differently hued in different creatures.]

“Verse no. 13 = During the dreaming state of consciousness called the Swapna state, the same Jiva-Atma constructs its own world of fantasy in which it lives in the same way as it had done when it was in the earlier state of Jagrat (waking). This imaginary world gives the Jiva-Atma the same sorrow and happiness that it had been experiencing while awake. [In other words, it thinks that the world of dreams is for real. This very notion is sufficient to prove that it is hallucinating.]

In the deep sleep state of consciousness called the Sushupta state, all the delusions created by Maya and its characteristic Tama Guna¹ are dispelled and expunged, resulting in real peace and tranquility for the Jiva-Atma² (13).

[Note—¹Tama Guna—The three Gunas and their effect on the creature have been elucidated in great detail in s no. 6 of this appendix. The various permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular ‘nature’ of an individual giving him his individuality and his special characters which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process et al.

²All the negativity that is associated with the Tama Guna which is synonymous with Maya are dispensed with in the third state of existence of consciousness called the Sushupta state. This is because in this state both the gross body consisting of the organs of action and perception as well as the subtle body consisting of the mind-intellect complex have become defunct. Only the pure consciousness exists in the causal body, surrounded by the bliss sheath. As the name suggests anything that gives ‘bliss’ must be free from agitations and negativity. Therefore, the Atma must be free from all agitations and negativity associated with either the Maya or the Gunas that are limited to the body. These two only taint the outer sheaths that surround the Atma, and not its own true nature and form much like the case of the fire which always remains immaculate and pure in spite of all sorts of impurities and rubbish being thrown into it. These impurities might affect the colour of the fire for some time, they might even produce smoke for a while and appear to affect the brightness of the fire, but as soon as these impurities are reduced to ashes the brightness and splendour of the fire reemerges with its original glory. If we cite the example of the Sun we find that there are ‘spots’ on the Sun’s disc, but upon closer examination we find that these spots are in its atmosphere and not in its core which is a cauldron of brilliantly burning fire. Similarly, whatever spots that might appear on the Atma are all superfluous and caused by the fact that this Atma lives in a gross body having numerous taints, but they never affect its original core form as Consciousness.

The concept of the Jiva Atma has been explained in the Brahm Vidya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda.]

“Verse no. 14 = After sometime, the Jiva-Atma reverts back to the state of consciousness from which it had gone to this deep sleep state of being free from all delusions because it is being constantly buffeted by the hangover and the rebounding affect of the deeds done by it during its earlier state of awareness of the world when it was in the waking state of consciousness, as well as the accumulated burden of pre-conditioned erroneous notions of its self as being the body instead of the pure consciousness which it had inherited from its previous lives.

The combined effect is that the Jiva-Atma once again wakes up into this world and plunges head-on in doing deeds and getting involved in them in its attempt to find peace and happiness, forgetting in the melee that just a while ago it had indeed found that peace and happiness in its deep sleep state called the Sushupta state of existence.

In this way, the Jiva-Atma exists in three places or planes during these three states of its existence. These three places are like the three bodies in which it resides during these three phases or planes of its existence. They are called the gross body

which relates to its waking state, the subtle body which relates to its dreaming state, and the causal body which relates to its deep sleep state¹.

It is because the creature's Atma erroneously and fallaciously assumes that it has three lives, and not one stable uniform existence, that he is subjected to all forms of perplexities and confusions. It is this basic fault of perception that is at the root cause of all the mysteries and strange confusions that the creature encounters.

The consciousness that is the 'cause' of all this maverick world of delusions is itself free from all delusion². It is in its self a fountain of bliss and happiness; it is wise and wholesome; it is undiluted and uniform enlightenment.

In the final analysis, when the seeker of Absolute Truth personified by Brahm realises this fact, all the three levels or bodies in which the Atma was assumed to be present collapse and merge themselves into one unit which has no fractured existence and no separate characters. That is, for a self-realised man, the only body that matters is the one that harbours the Atma and which is the causal body as it is the one which is the 'cause' of all that exists (14).

[Note—¹The three states of existence of the Atma and the three relevant bodies have been explained in detail in s no. 3 of this appendix. Some diagrams have been appended at the end of this appendix to further aid understanding of this concept.

The erroneous perception of the Jiva Atma that it exists in these planes instead of one non-dual state that is universal, immutable and constant is at the root of all its problems. Had the creature realised that its 'true self' is the pure consciousness and not the body it would not have been buffeted by so many notions and perceptions that add to its confusions, leading to perplexities and consternation. The realised Jiva Atma would not be tossed between happiness and joys on the one hand, and miseries and sorrows on the other hand.

²Anything that has life can act and dream, for a dead entity does neither of these two things. This fact itself proves that there must be something that is the 'cause' of creating all this illusion just like there must be a magician who creates all sorts of illusions on stage during a show. This hidden entity, like the magician, is the pure consciousness ensconced in the 'causal body' of the creature as its Atma. This is precisely why the abode of the pure consciousness is called 'casual' because it is the 'cause' of all that exists, including the magical world of delusions.]"

The *Annapurna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition describes the eclectic concept of Turiya in its Canto 1, verse nos. 27, 29, 51-52; Canto 2, verse nos. 13-16; and Canto 3, verse nos. 17-18. Now let us see what these verses say on this subject—

“Canto 1, verse nos. 27, 29, 51-52 = By diligently practicing control of the mind for a long time by doing various Aasans (sitting postures) and other meditative techniques of Yoga (such as Pranayam or breath control, Bandhas or closing all exposure of the mind to the turmoil of the external world, etc.), one is able to become aware of the 'truth' of the presence of the pure consciousness inside one's own self as well as is able to get rid of the various Bhrams (delusions, misconceptions, illusionary sights and their causes as described in verse nos. 13-16 above) that are associated with this life. In other words, one is able to ascertain the 'truth' and do away with the falsehood. In fact, when the 'truth' dawns on one's mental horizon, the darkness of

falsehood is automatically dispelled. He is then able to attain the auspicious state of Mukti as well as of Turiya and Samadhi (as narrated in the foregoing verses) (27).

A person who can remain calm and steady by controlling his Vasanas (i.e. the inherent passions, yearnings, desires and wishes that are so characteristic of all living beings; worldly attachments and attractions) is the one who can keep his mind and heart steady and focused on his spiritual goal. Such a man is said to be steady and unwavering in his spiritual pursuit.

When an aspirant reaches this exalted state of existence when he is not disturbed by the constant interference of the various Vasanas, he can experience the bliss and peace that are only available when this state is reached. He is deemed to be in the state of Samadhi or a trance-like state marked with indifference to the gross existence consisting of the material world and the gross body, a state of complete peace and tranquility that bestows rest and bliss to the aspirant. Since true peace and bliss is available only when one gets rid of the Vasanas and obtains the state of Samadhi, it also called the 'Kaivalya state of existence' (because the word 'Kaivalya' literally means one of its only kind). [This is very obvious—when a man is being subjected to constant nagging demands of the sense organs of the body as well as the heart and the mind, he can never ever hope to find peace. He would be constantly striving to fulfill their never-ending requests and expectations. It is only when he shuns them or shuts off the door to them that he can 'sleep or rest in peace'. This phrase 'sleep and rest in peace' is a metaphor for his state of Turiya and Samadhi because he is unaware of anything pertaining to the external physical world made aware of by the medium of the sense organs of the gross body, as well as the subtle world of the sub-conscious mind that exists in his dreams. When this overwhelming calmness prevails, when there is nothing to disturb the Atma, the latter finds true rest and peace. Since true rest and peace and their accompanying sense of bliss and happiness is available only when this eclectic state is reached, it is defined as the 'Kaivalya' state—or the state that is unique and unmatched. This existential state bestows him with extreme bliss and peace; he feels full of beatitude and felicity; he is steady, unruffled and unmoving; he is unaffected by anything in this world; he is totally indifferent and neutral to everything, being merely a witness to all. He exists in his truthful state of enlightened 'self', and it is tantamount to his being in the Turiya or Samadhi state of enlightened existence.] (29).

This highest form of Samadhi is said to have its only origin in the enlightenment and true wisdom that the Chitta (the sub-conscious mind) has obtained. In other words, the true form of Samadhi is obtained when the mind is illuminated (taught; made aware of; wizened) about the 'truth', and thereby becomes enlightened.

Those who are well-versed in the eclectic philosophy of the Vedas regard this as the Turiya state of existence (which is the transcendental state). [Hence, Samadhi and Turiya are equivalent to each other.] (51).

The Sushupta state (or the 'deep sleep state) of consciousness is on the threshold of the Turiya state; it precedes the Turiya state and is very close to it.

When the Mana (mind) and Ahankar (ego, pride) dissolve (i.e. when both the mind that harbours ego, and the ego that influences the working of the mind, are made ineffective, are neutralized) it is then that the aspirant is said to have reached the Sushupta state.

[The Sushupta state of existence is the deep sleep state that comes after the Swapna or dreaming state of consciousness. In this state the mind and the sub-conscious are both defunct. The difference between the Sushupta and Turiya states is that the creature reverts to the Swapna state from the Sushupta state, but when he

reaches the Turiya state this reversal does not happen. That is why the Turiya state is likened to Samadhi while the Sushupta state isn't. The concept of various states of existence has been explained in detail in an appendix at the end of this volume.] (52)."

"Canto 2, verse nos. 13-16 = Oh Nidagh! The subtle Sushupta state of the mind and sub-conscious (when they are inactive and defunct for all practical purposes even though the creature might be physically awake as described in verse no. 12 above) is achieved and made steady by constant practice.

When the Sushupta state is ripe and perpetual, it is known as the 'Turiya' state. This is what those who are experts in the essence of metaphysics assert (13).

All the worldly problems of the spiritual aspirant are eliminated in the Turiya state, and he obtains a perpetual state of extreme Anand (blissfulness, beatitude and felicity marked by ecstasy and contentedness) in this state (14).

This extreme sense of Anand that is experienced in the Turiya state is also called 'A-Anand'—the state of existence when the feeling of Anand is so permanent and all-pervading that the aspirant is not even aware of its presence, he is so habituated to it that he does not find anything special about it. Hence, he becomes neutral to the enjoyment of Anand as well.

[It is like the case of a man who is habituated to the worldly comforts of a wealthy life. A man who is poor greedily yearns for such a life, and if he is fortunate enough to access it he would wallow in it for some time till he becomes bored with it. The rich man is habituated with a pampered life of material comfort so much so that he pays no attention to it for it is taken for granted by him. Similarly, a spiritual aspirant who has reached the Turiya state of existence is becomes so steady in it that the fact he is in blissful and contented state has no special significance for him; it is routine thing henceforth.]

This sort of Anand, i.e. the so-called 'A-Anand', is eternal and immense in its stretch and dimension. It is also called 'Maha-Anand' or 'the great bliss, the great beatitude and the great felicity'.

The state of 'Maha-Anand' is so steady, so robust, so permanent and so perpetual that not even 'Kaal' (all dimensions of time and circumstance) can disturb it; it is beyond the reach and purview of Kaal.

[That is, not even the greatest of adversities can disturb the level of bliss, happiness and contentedness that a man who has reached the Turiya state enjoys. No temptations of the world are strong enough or charming enough to allure him away from the state of blissfulness and contentedness in which he lives during the Turiya state.]

Such an ascetic or Yogi who has obtained the Turiya state of consciousness is deemed to have attained Mukti (i.e. has attained liberation and deliverance) (15).

All the fetters and bondages that are an integral part of the creature's life in this world, and which have shackled him to the world not only in this present life but even had done so in his past lives, are broken and done away with when he has reached the Turiya state.

All his negative traits such as having 'Abhimaan' (i.e. having a sense of ego and false pride with their accompanying arrogance and haughtiness) are dispelled.

[A man feels proud on having successfully done anything only when he thinks that he is the one who has done something, when he feels that he had skillfully handled the situation leading to achievement of success. But when he has developed the eclectic view of not getting involved in the deeds done by the body, when he

maintains stoic neutrality and detachment towards the deeds then he cannot claim any honours for success. Hence, there would be no reason for his developing any sort of 'Abhimaan' in whatever success that has been achieved by his body in this life. He would be doing deeds but remains totally immune to any sense of pride and ego related to them. This is exactly what is expected of an enlightened man who has reached the Turiya state of existence.]

Just like a piece of salt put in water dissolves in it without leaving a trace, becoming one with the water itself, a spiritual aspirant who has obtained the highest state of realisation and enlightenment dissolves his 'self' and merges it with the supreme 'Self' to become one with it and indistinguishable from it. Such an aspirant is honoured as being a 'Mahatma'—a great Atma, a great soul (16)."

"Canto 3, verse nos. 17-18 = A self-realised and enlightened man lives with a calm, peaceful and steady mind and sub-conscious that is the natural state of consciousness during the Sushupta state. In this state, the only entity that exists is the consciousness with its grand sublime virtues and eclectic divine qualities, while the world, both the gross and the subtle, are made redundant. Thus, the man can live peacefully and blissfully, without any kind of restlessness and agitations, or any kind of bewilderments, confusions or doubts when he has reached the Sushupta state of existence.

[The Sushupta state is the third state of existence of consciousness when the mind as well as the sub-conscious has been rendered inactive, or they have shut down. This is a higher state of sleep and it comes beyond the second state of Swapna or dreams when the sub-conscious mind is active even though the active aspect of the mind is shut down. Since the mind is the only instrument that acts as a link between the pure consciousness and the external world, whether at the gross level or at the subtle level, when the mind is kept aside the consciousness is left alone, and it is then that its natural and inborn characteristics and virtues come to the fore. These are marked by calmness of demeanours and a state of blissfulness and peace.]

This Sushupta state is the preparatory state for the higher state of Turiya. In other words, what is experienced during the Sushupta state is made permanent and robust in the Turiya state (refer verse no. 18 below). The Turiya state is compared to a large mountain which is absolutely unmoving and unchanging over time no matter what happens in the world around it.

[No seasons affect it; rain, sunshine and tempest are equal for it. It may be covered by snow or might harbour a vibrant wildlife and a dense forest, but none of them ever bothers the mountain. Similarly, nothing of the world ever affects the inner-self of a spiritually enlightened aspirant who has attained the Turiya state of existence.] (17).

By first attaining the Sushupta state he progresses and graduates to the higher state of Turiya. Such an attained soul achieves an eclectic state of existence where everything is alike for it, where it does not distinguish between a situation that gives happiness and bliss and another that does not. For an enlightened man, there is no such thing as something being 'true' and the other being 'un-true', for he has developed complete neutrality towards everything else except the Consciousness that he knows is an irrefutable and unequivocal Truth. Once the 'Absolute Truth' is known, other non-absolute truths do not bother him at all.

[In other words, he lives in that higher state of consciousness where mundane matters do not cast their dark shadow of unhappiness and misery. He is so high up in the hierarchy of existence that lowly things do not matter for him or bother him much

like the sun is unbothered by small patches of the earth that are covered by clouds or some deep cave where no sunshine ever reaches. The earth rotates on its axis as it goes around the sun so that every day a new fraction of the earth's surface would face the sun, but the sun is unconcerned.] (18)."

These four states of consciousness have been described in *Brahm Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda in its verse nos. 20-21 as follows—

“Verse no. 20 = Just like a spider weaves a web and then gobbles up its own creation, the living being too oscillates between the two states of consciousness called Jagrat or the waking state, and the Swapna or dreaming state (20).

[Note—The consciousness exists in this world at two planes or levels—one is called the gross level and the other is called the subtle level. These two planes of its existence are called the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness, and the Swapna or dreaming state of consciousness respectively.

During the waking state, the Atma or the ‘self’ lives in the gross world through the medium of the gross organs of the body consisting of the organs of perception (eye that sees, ears that hear, tongue that tastes, nose that smells and skin that feels) and the organs of action (hands that receive and does deeds, legs that move and go to places, mouth that eats and speaks, genitals that reproduce and excretory organs that eliminate). The Atma is awake from the perspective of the world because it is interactive with it, perceives its stimuli and responds to them.

The second stage is when the gross body has become defunct and non-active, and in this case the Atma lives in the world governed only by the mind-intellect complex, the heart, the numerous Naadis or ducts such as the nerves and veins etc. which are collectively called the subtle body. Here the sub-conscious mind comes into play, and it conjures up a world of its own which is a subtle world of dreams. It is called a ‘dream’ because it has no physical presence and no gross organs are involved. The upside of this dream world is that it is not subjected to the limitations imposed by the gross organs of the body and can be many times more fascinating, diverse and grand than the physical world where the gross organs of the body come into play. This is because the mind's reach has no end and the dreams are the creations of the sub-conscious mind.

In both the cases the mind is active, but on a different plane. In the case of the waking state it is limited by the ability and reach of the physical organs, while in the dreaming state it is left to its own accord and abilities. So the creature oscillates between these two worlds when the Atma relies upon the mind to perceive the world. He either lives in the physical gross world in his waking state or the subtle world in his dreaming state. When in the waking state, he forgets about the world of dreams, and when in the dreaming state he forgets about the world of waking state. They cannot exist simultaneously. When dreaming, he withdraws the tentacle-like organs of perception and action from the world, and when awake these organs are spread out.

From the above discussion it naturally follows that if the mind is taken out of the picture, the Atma would transit to a next higher plane of existence which transcends these two states. Hence, the third state is the deep sleep state or the Sushupta state of consciousness where the mind is completely defunct

and inactive. Since the mind is absent, the world also ceases to remain in any of the two forms discussed herein above. In this third state the Atma or the consciousness exists in its pristine form in the blissful state surrounded by the Bliss Sheath. Usually for an ordinary creature, this third state is transient and soon he reverts back to the earlier two stages.

But if this third stage becomes perpetual, he is said to live in the fourth state called Turiya or the transcendental state of blissfulness. This is a very typical stage of existence inasmuch as that when a creature is able to reach it, he appears to be active in this world, he goes about his normal duties and appears to be awake as during a normal Jagrat state, but internally he is asleep to the external world in the sense that his mind does not register any incoming stimuli from the external world. Such a person would do deeds but not remember what he is doing or has done a moment ago. He would not recollect anything. Such a man is deemed to be free from deeds and their consequences though outwardly his body is involved in doing deeds. Such a man is said to be in a perpetual state of Samadhi.]

“Verse no. 21 = The Atma known by the name of Vaishwanar during the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness symbolically resides in the eye¹.

The Atma known by the name of Taijas during the Swapna or dreaming state of consciousness symbolically resides in the throat².

The Atma known by the name of Pragya (i.e. the consciousness in its primary enlightened form having awareness and knowledge, erudition and wisdom) during the Sushupta or deep sleep state of consciousness symbolically resides in the heart³.

Finally, the Atma is known by the name of Turiya when it transcends these three states of existence and lives in the divine and eclectic spot in the body called the Brahm-Randhra⁴. (21).

[Note—¹The word Vaishwanar has many connotations as follows—(i) It is the fire used in sacrificial rituals. (ii) The microcosmic pure consciousness that resides inside the body of the creature, providing it with life, vitality and energy which helps it to digest food. (iii) Vedanta says that it is the pure consciousness that is a fraction of the Supreme Consciousness, and it resides in the body of the creature even as the Supreme Consciousness resides in the macrocosmic vast body of Nature or creation. It is representative of the supreme, transcendental entity that is the Lord and the primary cause and the governing authority of the whole creation. (iv) Since the creatures have myriad forms, it has as many forms as the creatures themselves, incorporating all of them in it. Hence, it is also called ‘Viraat Purush’ (which means the vast, colossus, all incorporating, all-pervading, almighty form of the microcosmic Atma of the creature as well as the macrocosmic Atma of the creation; it is measureless, infinite and eternal). This is the subtle form of ‘Vaishwanar’. (v) The gross manifestations of this ‘Vaishwanar’ is the ‘Annamaya Kosh’ or the food sheath which is one of the five sheaths enclosing the Atma of the creature. This is because, as the Vaishwanar Agni (fire), it helps in digestion of food. (vi) Its state of existence is defined as the ‘waking state of consciousness’. (vii) The word also means—relating to or belonging to all men, omnipresent, known and worshipped everywhere, universal, general, common, complete, immutable, full in number, a collective noun for all the Gods, one who is all commanding and almighty.

The word Vaishwanar refers to the universal fire element because the fire provides the light with which the creature sees the world. The fire removes darkness and illuminates the realm with its light. In this context, the Sun is the eye of Brahm in the sky because it is through this Sun and its fire that the world is lighted and energized. The faculty of sight in the eye of the creature is thus a symbolic presence of this Vaishwanar at the macro level of creation.

The Atma is called a Vaishwanar because the man becomes aware of the world when he sees it with his own eyes. This is why it is called the 'waking' state of consciousness. The presence of the consciousness known as the Vaishwanar in the eye is a metaphor for this waking state because when a man 'sees' anything only when he is awake and not while he sleeps.

²This is because the man remains mentally active while dreaming even though his physical body is inactive, and this is symbolised by saying that his consciousness resides in his throat. It has been observed that a dreaming man is sometimes so engrossed and involved in the world of his dreams, experiencing emotions and sentiments so intensely that often he might whisper or make guttural sounds during sleep. There are instances when a man even talks aloud in his dream. Snoring is another manifestation of the presence of consciousness in the throat. When a man wakes up from his dreams, the only way he can describe what he has 'seen and witnessed' during his dream is by the use of words, and this implies the use of voice which has its seat in the throat.

³This is because the man's Atma has its primary divine abode in his heart. Even when the man does not dream, i.e. even when his sub-conscious mind ceases to function, his heart continues to beat uniformly and incessantly. Had it not been so, the person would have died. The proof that the Atma—which is the pure consciousness symbolising the vital spark of life present inside the otherwise lifeless gross body of the creature and the only factor that can be definitively called 'the life-giving entity' in the body—residing in the heart as an embodiment of such glorious virtues as enlightenment, knowledge, wisdom, awareness, erudition and such other eclectic virtues that are the hallmarks of consciousness lies in the fact that when this man wakes up, he immediately connects with the external world even in a fraction of a second, recollecting instantly what he had been doing, what he had learnt before sleeping, and so on and so forth. If the Atma had lacked the attribute of 'Pragya' as described here, the person would not have been able to recollect what his name was, what he had been doing before going to sleep, what he had learnt earlier, etc. So it is said that the Atma exhibits all the eclectic and sublime virtues which come under the broad definition of Pragya.

⁴The Brahm-Randhra is the hair-like slit on the top of the head from where the supreme Brahm had entered the body of the man at the time of creation, and it is the spot from which the Pran or vital winds of an ascetic (a Yogi) escapes from his body at the time of his death, while he is meditating at that time, to merge with the elements in Nature and become one with them. During the life time of the ascetic, he concentrates his life-forces by the virtue of various Yoga techniques at this spot, which results in his attaining extreme sense of blissfulness and peace. A truly realised and seasoned ascetic can continue to live in this perpetual state of beatitude and felicity even while he manages to do all his routine deeds in this world.

Among the other Upanishads, it appears in Kaivalyo-panishad in verse no. 12-14. Elsewhere, this concept has been elaborately described in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 1/1/17-20, 2/1/16-20, and 4/3/9-38.]”

The *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 8, verse nos. 9-16, and 19-20 explains the four states of existence elaborately. Let us now see what it has to say—

“Verse no. 9-11 = [Verse nos. 9-19 describe the four Paads or steps symbolising the different forms in which the supreme Brahm exists.]

Now the different Paads of the supreme Brahm are being enumerated in a step-by-step manner. Since the Atma is a personification of this Brahm, since it is this Atma residing inside the body of the creature that actually perceives this world and enjoys it in its gross, subtle and subtlest forms, and since inspite of all this the Atma retains its primary form as being eternally blissful and contented, it too has all the different Paads associated with Brahm.

It is said that the Atma has four Paads or steps or aspects or forms similar to that of Brahm.

The Jagrat or waking state of consciousness is the first Paad of the Atma at the macro level of creation, and of Brahm at the macro level of creation.

[Briefly, the Jagrat state of consciousness is that state in which the creature perceives the physical external world through its gross body and its sense organs. In this state, the stimuli from the external world are received by the organs of perception and sent to the brain or mind. The latter then does the actual interpretation job and gives the necessary instructions to the organs of action to act. For more serious matters it consults the intellect. During this waking state, the creature becomes aware of the existence of the physical world, comes to witness it first hand, and gains a hands-on experience of its varied facets. It does have to imagine the existence of this world because the latter is witnessed first hand directly. In the entire episode, the sub-conscious mind stores information gathered by the mind and intellect for future reference. Hence, during the Jagrat state, the mind and intellect as well as the gross body consisting of the various sense organs are directly involved. The word ‘Jagrat’ also has a metaphoric connotation in as much as it implies that whatever the creature comes to learn is when he is wide awake and can consciously pick and choose what to and what not to learn. It is called ‘Viswa’ or the world at large because he not only learns about his immediate surroundings but about the world as it exists even in far off places, in the past and the present. Based on this statistical knowledge the creature can even predict the future intelligently.]

In this form, the visible gross world is its body (because it physically lives in it and actually perceives it), who (Brahm) pervades or lives throughout the visible world (even as consciousness lives in all parts of the body of a creature while he is awake), whose all-knowing wisdom covers the entire gamut of the visible world (because when a wise and intelligent creature is awake he becomes aware of all the happenings around him), who is the protector of the entire visible world (because as soon as consciousness retracts itself from this world, the latter ceases to exist) [9-10],—

—who has nineteen metaphoric mouths (symbolised by the following—the 5 sense organs such as ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin + 5 organs of action such as hands, legs, mouth, excretory and genitals + 5 Prans or vital airs or winds such as Pran or main breath, Apaana, Vyana, Udaana and Samana + 4 Anthakarans or inner self such as Mana or mind, Buddhi or intellect, Chitta or sub-conscious and Ahankar or

ego and pride = 19), whose limbs are the eight Lokas (consisting of Bhu, Bhurva, Swaha, Maha, Janaha, Tapaha, Satyam and Patal =8), who is the undisputed supreme Lord ('Prabhu') of the entire world, who is revealed in the four states of existence known as Sthul or gross, Sukshma or subtle, Kaaran or causal, and Sakshi or the one who is a sole witness of everything—verily, the supreme transcendental and all-pervasive macrocosmic Brahm who has revealed himself as this vast and colossus creation is known as Vaishwanar Purush or the Viraat Purush. [The Vaishwanar is the all-pervading and all-encompassing macrocosmic form of Brahm. It is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm and represents the sum total of all gross bodies in existence as well as the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness.] [11] (9-11).

“Verse no. 12 = Verily, the above described form of existence is the first Paad of the supreme transcendental Brahm.

[Now the second Paad is being narrated.]

The second state in which consciousness exists is known as Swapna or the dreaming state.

[The Swapna or dreaming state, as the name suggests, is when a creature imagines the presence of a world which has no physical existence. In this case, the physical gross body is asleep or inactive, as is the conscious aspect of the mind and intellect. Only the sub-conscious aspect of the mind is active, and the creature draws upon the data-bank of this sub-conscious mind to conjure up a fascinating world of virtuality. All knowledge that the consciousness gathered while in the Swapna state is not physical, and it exists only in the subtle level. This knowledge may be quite divergent from the knowledge of the Jagrat state. And this is the reason why the world of dreams is often very different from the world which exists in the waking state. Whereas the knowledge and the world during the Jagrat state is like the hard copy of anything, the world and knowledge of Swapna is like the soft copy. Whereas one can actually have the feel of the hard copy and its existence can be ascertained and protected, no one can feel the soft copy, and when the latter would vanish due to some software problem is most uncertain to say. But whereas the world during the Jagrat state has its own limits due to a variety of practical and physical factors, no such limitations are imposed in the subtle state and the consciousness can imagine things and create a world much more fascinating and colourful than actually possible in practice in the Jagrat state.]

The Atma (i.e. the creature's true self) that is conscious of existence of the world in its subtle form (as opposed to the gross and physical form) in the creature's dreaming state is the de-facto Lord of this state. [This is because it is the Atma that conjures up a world of dreams. If it so wants, it can exclude this state, and once the creature retires to rest and the body ceases to function, the consciousness can allow the mind to rest too. And when this happens the creature wouldn't dream. In other words, just like any kingdom is headed by a ruling monarch, the world of dreams is headed by this subtle aspect of the Atma.]

And since Atma and Brahm are synonymous with each other, it is said that this subtle state of existence of consciousness, which is equivalent to the dreaming state of existence, or the Swapna state, is the second Paad or aspect of the cosmic Brahm.

Hence, Brahm or the cosmic Consciousness that exists in the dreaming state of existence and makes the creature aware of the subtle world that exists only virtually in one's dreams is called 'Sukshma Pragya Brahm'—i.e. Brahm that is manifested and

known in its subtle form (as opposed to its gross form known as the Vishwa that exists in the Jagrat or waking state).

This Brahm also has the eight limbs or aspects as described earlier for the Vishwa or Viraat Brahm. [Refer verse no. 11.]

Oh the one who has done great Tapa (i.e. has done great austerity and penance; a reference to sage Narad)! This Brahm or consciousness in the form of the Atma is all alone in the Swapna state of existence. [And this is why this consciousness is called ‘Prabhu’ or Lord of this subtle state of dreams. The same epithet Prabhu was used in verse no. 11 to describe Brahm as the only Lord in the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness.] (12).

“Verse no. 13 = This subtle aspect of Brahm or the ‘Sukshma Brahm’ (i.e. the consciousness that exists in the Swapna or dreaming state of existence) is the one who sustains and experiences the presence the presence of various Tattvas or elements as they exist in their subtle state or form.

If this subtle Brahm or subtle consciousness that exists in the Swapna state is taken as having an independent existence, then it can also be said to have the four distinct states of existences as the gross aspect of Brahm did. [This subtle form consciousness in the dreaming state is said to have an independent existence because a world of dreams is an independent world, complete in its self in all respects. While a creature dreams, he behaves just like he would do in the real world—he has relations, he does so many deeds, he cries and laughs, he goes here and there, he loves and hates, he eats and fasts, and so on. Except for the fact that the physical gross body with its natural limitations is not involved, there is not much of a difference between the actual world of the waking state and the world of dreams. These two worlds are like independent worlds having separate existence. For instance, whereas a man may be a pauper in the gross physical world of the Jagrat state, he might be a king in the Swapna world. Therefore, if the consciousness or Brahm or Atma can have four states of existence while in the Jagrat state, it can also have similar or equivalent number of forms in the Swapna state. These four states are symbolically—Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya. One might wonder, for instance, how a creature can be dreaming while already in the dreaming state. Well, since the world of dreams is an independent world of its own, a creature can be awake in it, doing so many things, or he might sleep and dream like he would do while actually sleeping in the physical world. It must be noted that we are dealing with the analysis of Brahm, an entity that is unknown, most mysterious, enigmatic and esoteric, and like in science or mathematics we have to presume certain things based on known data and experience in order to arrive at a definite conclusion about the unknown.]

The Atma or the individual’s consciousness that exists in the Swapna state of existence is known as ‘Taijas’. It is because it is magnificent, majestic, glorious and dynamic. [Why so? It is because whereas in the Jagrat state of existence the Atma was subject to the limitations of the gross body, no such boundaries exist in the Swapna state. The Atma in the Swapna or dreaming state is more dynamic and maverick and powerful, capable of achieving stupendous and astounding things that would be impossible for it to accomplish while in the Jagrat or waking state.]

The consciousness that exists in the individual level of the creature, i.e. in the macro level of creation, is called Taijas as mentioned above, while the same consciousness when it is considered at the macro level of existence is known as ‘Hiranyagarbha’. [The ‘Hiranyagarbha’ is therefore the sum total of all subtle bodies in creation.]

The previous form of cosmic Consciousness which is known as the Viraat or Vaishwanar is the gross aspect of Brahm (refer verse nos. 10-11), while the form known as Hiranyagarbha (as described in verse nos. 12-13) is the subtle aspect of Brahm.

This subtle form of the cosmic Consciousness known as Hiranyagarbha is the second Paad of the supreme Brahm (13).

“Verse no. 14 = [This verse describes the third state of consciousness known as Sushupta.]

The living being in the Sushupta state of existence does not see any dreams and neither does he has any sort of wishes for enjoyment of any sense organs or objects. It is a state of dissolution when nothing exists and matters.

[Briefly, the Sushupta state is the deep sleep state of consciousness when even the sub-conscious mind goes into hibernation. With the mind and body both becoming defunct, the creature is neither awake nor dreaming. It exists in a state of neutrality or dissolution. Thus it experiences nothing of the physical world of the Jagrat state or that of the Swapna state.]

The cosmic Consciousness that exists in this state of complete dissolution known as Sushupta, is known as the Kaaran or the causal body. It is the sum total of all the causal bodies of creation. [As the word implies, this state of consciousness is the ‘causative factor’—or Kaaran—that gives rise to all other aspects or forms of existence of consciousness. It is from this neutral state that the other forms of conscious existence emerge. Hence, it is the ‘cause’ of coming into being the other states of consciousness such as the Swapna and the Jagrat. Therefore, this neutral and virtually dissolved state of consciousness is called the ‘Kaaran’ or the ‘causative’ aspect of the existence.] (14).

“Verse no. 15 = In this primary form of Kaaran or causal body, the Consciousness is in a single form (i.e. it is still not revealed in its many connotations or varied aspects). It is unique and magnificent in its self. It is endowed with profound Gyan (knowledge). [This is because any entity that has knowledge can ever hope to be the cause of initiating any sort of action that results in the development of something fresh. An entity that has no knowledge would not be able to achieve anything in any field. Knowledge is the driving force of any kind of activity and development. Since this Kaaran or causal body of the Consciousness is able to give rise to the other states of existence, since it can conjure up a fascinating world in its dreams, and then actually perceive this world in physical tangible form in the waking state, it is obvious that it has knowledge! It is not ignorant and stupid.]

It exists in a happy and eternally blissful state of existence. [This is because it has yet no worries of any kind, as the world—both the physical world of the Jagrat or waking state as well as the subtle world of the Swapna or dreaming state—is shut off. Since there are yet no perceptions, and since the mind that is the cause of all pain and miseries is still in a dissolved state, the consciousness exists in the blissful state of existence as long as it stays in the Kaaran body.]

This consciousness is the one that lives in the inner self or the subtle heart of all living beings as their Atma, their true and pure self (15).

“Verse no. 16 = At the macrocosmic level of creation, this state of consciousness is equivalent to the Ishwar or the supreme Lord of creation. This Ishwar is therefore in an eternally blissful state.

The light of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment is the metaphoric mouth of this Ishwar. He is omnipresent and all-pervading. He is eternal, imperishable, steady, constant and irrefutable as well as the absolute Truth of creation.

This supreme Ishwar or Lord is the one who has revealed himself in all the four forms in which consciousness exists in this creation (such as the Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya states)—and it is he who is known as ‘Pragya’ as well. [The Ishwar represents the sum total of all the causal bodies of creation at the cosmic level, while its counterpart at the level of the individual creature is known as Pragya. The word ‘Pragya’ literally implies one that knows, one that has knowledge, is wise, erudite and enlightened. All these are the characteristics of the Atma which is the pure consciousness in its primary form, and nothing else.]

Hence, Ishwar or Pragya stands for the third Paad of Brahm (the cosmic Consciousness) (16).

“Verse no. 19 = Besides the three Paads of Brahm (as narrated in verse nos. 9-16) there is one more Paad which is above or superior to all of them. It is called the transcendental state of consciousness, or Turiya state of existence.

All the states in which the cosmic Consciousness exists are deemed to be incorporated in this Turiya state. The consciousness in the Turiya state is in a non-dual form, and it is from this single entity that all the other three states of existence emerge. [It is like the case of a post-graduate student who has completed his MA degree. It is assumed and taken for granted that he must have passed his graduate BA degree and earlier his school leaving exam if he has the MA degree. When he has completed his MA degree, it is assumed that he has the knowledge that is taught at the level of the school as well as at the graduate level. Similarly, the higher and superior transcendental state of consciousness known as Turiya is deemed to have been arrived at by a creature after having crossed the earlier three stages of Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupta.] (19).

“Verse no. 20 = The three states of existence of the consciousness that are deemed to be incorporated in the Turiya state are Ot, Anugyat and Anugya. [Refer verse no. 3 of the present Canto 8 for elaboration.] They help one to analyse and understand the existence of the different aspects of the world and creation. But ultimately all come to a single point—and it is the non-dual nature of the consciousness as it exists in the eternally blissful Turiya state.

Just like the two states of existence (i.e. the Swapna or dreaming state as well as the Jagrat or waking state) are regarded as the delusory effect caused by Maya upon the pure consciousness that exists in the Sushupta state, it follows, by extension, that when the consciousness rises higher to the Turiya state then all the three states below it (i.e. the Sushupta, Swapna and Jagrat) are also the effect of Maya. [The Atma or pure consciousness of the creature in the Sushupta state is completely neutral. But under delusions it begins to think that it lives in a world of dreams or Swapna, and in the physical world of Jagrat. It oscillates between these three states because it is not certain which is true and which is false—refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 16-18, 34-35; and in Brahm Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda in its verse nos. 20-21. The Brahm/Amrit Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 11 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition describes the three states of existence of the consciousness as the Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupta. It goes on to affirm that ‘any person who is able to transcend these three states of existences, or who has reached the fourth state called the Turiya state of permanent beatitude and felicity, is the one

who does not have another birth'. 'Not having any more birth' is a metaphoric way of saying that the creature or his 'true self', has attained eternity in the form of realisation that it is not an ordinary entity but cosmic Consciousness that exists in the Turiya state. Refer also to our present Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4.]

Hence, a wise spiritual aspirant must understand and be convinced that there is only one non-dual supreme consciousness known as Brahm. It is most advisable for him to know this fact and overcome all delusions about this world and its existence (20)."

The *Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, paragraph nos. 6, describes the four states of existence of consciousness and their sub-divisions. It says that the main four states of existence of consciousness, viz. Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya, are further divided into four sub-classes each, thereby bringing the total number of states to sixteen. [$4 \times 4 = 16$.]

These sixteen states of consciousness correspond to the sixteen aspects or Paads of Brahm, the supreme, transcendental and divine Being. Since all living beings and everything rest in creation are an image of this universal and all-pervading Brahm, and since all living beings have the same cosmic Consciousness residing in them as their Atma, the pure conscious soul, it follows that the living world itself has sixteen sub-divisions from the perspective of metaphysics.

These divisions or classification of the state of existence of the universal Consciousness were explained to the creator Brahm by no less a divine One than Lord Adi-Narayan, the Supreme Being, himself. Now, let us quote this Upanishad and see what it has to say—" [Brahma (the creator) asked once again—] 'Oh Lord, what is form of 'Pranav Brahm' (the cosmic Consciousness)?'

[Lord Adi-Narayan replied—] 'Pranav Brahm has sixteen Matras or aspects. [These 'Matras' of Brahm are also known as 'Kalaas' of Brahm.]

There are four states of existence of consciousness, and each of them has four aspects, bringing the total to sixteen.

There are said to be four primary states of existence of consciousness—viz. Jagrat or waking state, Swapna or dreaming state, Sushupta or deep sleep state, and Turiya or post Sushupta state of existence of consciousness¹. Each of these primary states is further divided into four more subtle sub-classes of existence bearing the same names as the four primary states.

Hence, the first primary state of existence known as 'Jagrat' or waking state of consciousness has four subtle secondary states as sub-divisions or sub-classes known as Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya.

Similarly, the second primary state of existence known as 'Swapna' or dreaming state of consciousness has four subtle secondary states as sub-divisions or sub-classes known as Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya.

Likewise, the third primary state of existence known as 'Sushupta' or deep sleep state of consciousness has four subtle secondary states as sub-divisions or sub-classes known as Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya.

And finally, the fourth primary state of existence known as 'Turiya' or trans-Sushupta state of consciousness has four subtle secondary states as sub-divisions or sub-classes known as Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya.

Thus, the first primary state of consciousness known as 'Jagrat', when considered on a macro plane or level of existence, produces the vast external 'Vishwa' or the gross world of material sense objects. This state in which the

consciousness becomes aware of the external world includes four sub-levels, and each exists as a world in its own right. Hence, during the 'Jagrat' state we have the following four classes of Vishwa (external visible, gross world) known as 'Vishwa-Vishwa', 'Vishwa-Taijas', 'Vishwa-Pragya', and 'Vishwa-Turiya'.

The same principle is applied to the other three states.

Therefore, the second primary state of consciousness known as 'Swapna', when considered on a macro plane or level of existence, produces the subtle world known as 'Taijas' (literally meaning an entity that is glorious, effulgent, radiant and splendorous; here referring to the world of dreams which is more splendorous, charming, magnificent and fascinating than the real gross world of physical gross existence). This state in which the consciousness becomes aware of the subtle world that is imaginary but appears to be true as it is created by the glorious creative abilities of the mind and the sub-conscious includes four sub-levels, and each exists in its own right. Hence, during the 'Swapna' state we have the following four classes of existence of Taijas world—'Taijas-Vishwa', 'Taijas-Taijas', 'Taijas-Pragya', and 'Taijas-Turiya'.

Similarly, the third primary state of consciousness known as 'Sushupta', when considered on a macro plane or level of existence, produces the subtler world known as 'Pragya' (literally meaning an entity that is inherently wise, all-knowing, omniscient, enlightened and erudite). In this state the consciousness is free to see its own self because it is freed from the distractions caused to it by constant inputs from the gross organs of the body in relation to the external world and from the mind and its sub-conscious engaged in imagining a fascinating world of dreams. Hence, the consciousness is able to turn peacefully inwards and see the world of its own, and it is therefore called 'Pragya' as it is the world of enlightenment, wisdom, knowledge and erudition as opposed to the gross world known as Vishwa of the Jagrat state, and the subtle world known as Taijas of the Swapna state. Now, as in the previous cases, this Pragya also has four categories as follows—'Pragya-Vishwa', 'Pragya-Taijas', 'Pragya-Pragya', and 'Pragya-Turiya'.

Finally, the fourth primary state of consciousness known as 'Turiya', when considered on a macro plane or level of existence, produces the subtlest form in which the consciousness exists, the world known as the transcendental world or Turiya world. It is so-called because it crosses the outer limit of Sushupta in the sense that having reached this state, the consciousness does not have to revert back to the earlier three states of Sushupta, Swapna and Jagrat. It's virtually a permanent state of bliss and ecstasy when no awareness of any thing in its gross form exists, and the bliss and ecstasy are irreversible. Like the earlier three cases, this state is also sub-divided into four categories as follows—'Turiya-Vishwa', 'Turiya-Taijas', 'Turiya-Pragya', and 'Turiya-Turiya'.

Since consciousness and all forms of existence are nothing but Brahm, the super-consciousness, in all these forms, it follows that Brahm has sixteen Matras (or forms or aspects)."

This concept can be understood by a simple illustration. Suppose there are four types of bottles marked A, B, C and D. Each type has four bottles, hence we have four bottles of type A, four of B, four of C, and four of D, bringing the total number of bottles to sixteen. Now we are provided with four coloured liquids marked L1, L2, L3 and L4, and are asked to fill the four bottles of each category with each of these four liquids. When the filling is completed and the bottles are lined up and labeled, we will have a total of sixteen filled bottles, grouped in four categories of four bottles in each category as follows—

The 1st bottle of type 'A' having liquid 'L1', the 2nd bottle of type 'A' having liquid 'L2', the 3rd bottle of type 'A' having liquid 'L3', and the 4th bottle of type 'A' having liquid 'L4'.

Similarly, we fill the other group of bottles as follows—the 1st bottle of type 'B' having liquid 'L1', the 2nd bottle of type 'B' having liquid 'L2', the 3rd bottle of type 'B' having liquid 'L3', and the 4th bottle of type 'B' having liquid 'L4'.

Next, the bottles of group C are considered. The 1st bottle of type 'C' having liquid 'L1', the 2nd bottle of type 'C' having liquid 'L2', the 3rd bottle of type 'C' having liquid 'L3', and the 4th bottle of type 'C' having liquid 'L4'.

Finally we have the 1st bottle of type 'D' having liquid 'L1', the 2nd bottle of type 'D' having liquid 'L2', the 3rd bottle of type 'D' having liquid 'L3', and the 4th bottle of type 'D' having liquid 'L4'.

Thus, we have a total of 16 bottles filled with these liquids.

In this example, suppose the four types of bottles stand for the four states of existence of consciousness—viz. bottle of type 'A' represents Jagrat, bottle of type 'B' represents Swapna, bottle of type 'C' represents Sushupta, and bottle of type 'D' represents Turiya.

Similarly, suppose the four coloured liquids stand for the name assigned to this consciousness in each of these states—viz. liquid of type L1 represents Vishwa, liquid of type L2 represents Taijas, liquid of type L3 represents Pragya, and liquid of type L4 represents Turiya.

Therefore, we will have the following sequence—(i) Category A = 'Jagrat-Vishwa'; 'Jagrat-Tijas'; 'Jagrat-Pragya'; 'Jagrat-Turiya'; (ii) Category B = 'Swapna-Vishwa'; 'Swapna-Tijas'; 'Swapna-Pragya'; 'Swapna-Turiya'; (iii) Category C = 'Sushupta-Vishwa'; 'Sushupta-Tijas'; 'Sushupta-Pragya'; 'Sushupta-Turiya'; and finally (iv) Category D = 'Turiya-Vishwa'; 'Turiya-Tijas'; 'Turiya-Pragya'; 'Turiya-Turiya' = 16 states or aspects of the same consciousness.

An important point to note is that the existence of four sub-divisions in any one state of existence is a system adopted of grading the same consciousness into different subtle levels within the same state. It is like the system of grading students in school or college—those within the general grade 'A' are sub-divided into two or more categories such as A++, A+, A and A—.

The *Mandukya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 7 describes the fourth state of Turiya as follows—"That enigmatic, most esoteric and mystical entity which has paradoxical qualities such as it being neither enlightened or aware of anything nor being ignorant or not enlightened about it, an entity that is both enlightened and not enlightened, and hence deemed to be absolutely neutral so much so that it has no concern for or awareness of what is inside or what is outside, an entity that is neither understood or discerned by the organs of perceptions nor approachable or accessible by the organs of action, an entity that does nothing (as it does not need to do anything), an entity that has no parallel and comparisons or symbols, an entity that is beyond the reach of thoughts and speech (i.e. that cannot be thought of, cannot be even imagined, and cannot be spoken about or explained), an entity that is only accessible or witnessed by personal experience, an entity that is the point where everything in existence would ultimately collapse and conclude, an entity that is an embodiment of such divine virtues as being peaceful and tranquil, being auspicious and holy, and being non-dual and unmatched—verily, this entity is known as Brahm, the supreme transcendental Divine Being. And the state of its existence as

described herein above, the state in which it exhibits these grand qualities is called the fourth aspect or Paad of Brahm.

This fourth state of existence of the cosmic Consciousness is called ‘Turiya’—literally meaning the state that transcends the usual three levels in which an ordinary creature lives in this world. Indeed, this is the truthful form of the Atma that is worth knowing (as it represents the real and truthful nature of the soul of the creature). [In other words, the Atma exhibits these characteristics if it is left alone. Since the Atma is the microcosmic form of Brahm, it follows that these eclectic qualities are also the qualities of Brahm.]”

According to *Brahmo-panishad*, verse no. 1 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, these four states of existence represent Brahm in his different divine manifestations. It says—”Brahm as the Atma has also been envisioned to exist in the four states in which consciousness lives—viz. the Jagrat state called the ‘waking state of consciousness’, the Swapna state called the ‘dreaming state of consciousness’, the Shushupta state called the ‘deep sleep state of consciousness’, and the Turiya state called the ‘blissful state of consciousness’.

Each of these of four states of existence of the creature (i.e. the consciousness residing in the creature as it’s pure and true ‘self’ known as its Atma) are symbolic revelations of one of the four divine aspects of Brahm. Brahm literally ‘shines and makes its presence felt by its glorious illumination’ in each of these four states. That is, in the Jagrat state, Brahm shines and reveals itself as Brahma the creator, in the Swapna state it is represented by Vishnu the sustainer and protector, in the Shushupta state by Shiva the concluder, also known as Rudra, and in the Turiya state by the Akchar which is imperishable and eternal (i.e. ‘Akchar Brahm’—Brahm that does not decay and never perishes).”

(e) Finally comes the 5th state of existence of the Atma, and is called the *Turiyateet* state. This fifth state of Turiyateet or Turiyatit, literally the state that transcends the fourth state called Turiya, is one step further ahead in one’s spiritual endeavour and the last stage in spiritual upliftment when the person crosses the threshold of awareness of this world and ceases to participate even in his normal functions in this world. He remains, for all practical purposes, like a log of wood, totally uninterested in, detached from, dispassionate towards, and completely oblivious of the world around him. Turiyateet is also a state of Samadhi like the Turiya state, but it is higher and more eclectic stage as compared to the latter. The last stage, called ‘Turiyateet’, goes beyond the fourth stage when a man wakes up into this world but remains ‘virtually blind or sleeping’ as far as his mind is concerned in relation to the gross world. Therefore, he remains awake but does not see; he does not smell, taste, feel and speak. Since all external stimuli fail to arouse his brain, he remains like ‘a man sleep-walking’. In the absence of sensory perceptions, he does not feel either pain or sorrows, or happiness and joys. He remains totally oblivious to them. He lives in a state of complete blissfulness. This is the fifth state of existence of the Atma in its ‘super-conscious’ state.

The word ‘Turiya’ refers to the fourth state of existence of the pure consciousness, while the word ‘Atit’ or ‘Ateet’ means ‘free from, beyond’. Therefore, the composite word ‘Turiyateet’ would refer to that state of existence of the Atma or pure consciousness that has gone beyond all the four states of existences of the Atma, and hence would be the fifth state of its existence. It is the state which goes beyond

the perception of ordinary bliss and happiness; it is an eclectic state of perpetual and eternal spiritual beatitude and felicity from where there is no return. It is tantamount to final and ultimate liberation and deliverance of the soul of the creature. A Turiyateet lives in a perpetual state of Samadhi, which is a trance-like state of total indifference to everything; it is a state of total neutrality.

During this state the man remains in a state resembling a man sleep walking; he is not aware of what is good or what is bad for him; he would as cheerfully do one set of things as the other set. For him, everything is the same. In the absence of sensory perceptions, he neither feels pains nor enjoys anything. He remains a mute expectator of all that is happening around him.

From the practical standpoint, there is little difference between the fourth and fifth states of existence. Perhaps the time factor differentiates them, for in the case of the Turiya state there is a chance of the ascetic coming back to the earlier three stages of conscious existence, but in the case of the Turiyateet state such chances of reversal is not at all possible.

Turiya-teet = Yoga Upanishads explain its importance while describing how the Prans are mixed, the Kundalini activated, and the released energy made to enter the Sushumna Naadi and go upwards to reach the forehead and finally the top of the head. From here, the Pran either travels back the same route as indicated in this verse, or goes out of the body by escaping through the Brahm-Randhra.

While the Pran of the ascetic is in the region of the forehead as well as tip of the cranium he experiences extreme bliss and ecstasy. This is equivalent to the Sushupta state of existence. When the Pran travels back, the ascetic virtually comes back to the dreaming state and finally to the waking state of existence. Should the Pran remain swirling in the area of the head in the region of the forehead on a perpetual basis, the ascetic is said to be in a Turiya state of existence which is the transcendental state in the sense that the ascetic has ‘transcended’ the normal states of existence in which an ordinary creature lives.

When the Pran finally prepares to reach higher and swirl around the Brahm-Randhra preparing to make its final exit from the body, the ascetic is said to be in a Truiya-teet state which is nothing but the higher state of Turiya. When the Pran finally leaves the body by escaping out from the slit of the Brahm-Randhra, the ascetic gets Mukti or liberation and deliverance. This Mukti is called ‘Kaivalaya’ or the only one of its kind because once the Pran leaves the body it would not re-enter it. Hence, the ascetic’s Mukti is once and for all; there is no reversal.

The *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 6, verse no. 4 describes the five states of existence, viz. the Jagrat, the Swapna, the Sushupta, the Turiya and the Turiyatit along with narrating why the same consciousness is given two names of Parmatma and Atma, and what is the difference or similarity between them. Now let us see what it has to say—

“The four states in which a Jiva (living being) exists are the following—Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya. The fifth state called the Turiyatit state is beyond these four.

In other words, the same Atma appears to exist in four different forms depending upon these four states of a creature’s conscious existence. Hence, the Atma that lives in the Jagrat state is called ‘Vishwa’, in the Swapna state it is called ‘Taijas’, in the Sushupta state it is called ‘Pragya’, and in the Truiya state it is called ‘Tathastha’ (literally meaning non-involved, indifferent and completely neutral). The

Atma or consciousness that exists beyond these four states, the Atma which exists in the transcendental state called Turiyatit, is known as the ‘Parmatma’—or the supreme Atma or the transcendental Consciousness. Since it is in ‘transcendental’ state of existence which goes beyond all the known states of worldly existence, it is natural that it rises above the mundane and remains free from all the faults and shortcomings that are associated with worldly existence—i.e. the Parmatma is immaculate and devoid of all taints and corruptions that might have shrouded the Atma when it assumes a gross body while it lives in this world. [This is the reason why the Parmatma is compared to the sky because the sky stays above the gross world known as the earth and does not have any of the limitations of the earth.]

Again, since the wise ascetic has already realised that his true ‘self’ is the Atma that lives in the Turiyatit state of existence (refer last paragraph of verse no. 3), it is obvious that he is like this Parmatma. So he exclaims upon this eclectic discovery—‘I am Brahm (the Parmatma)!’

A person who lives perpetually in this Turiyatit state is deemed to be free from the limitations imposed by the other four states of existence. It may be argued that this Turiyatit state incorporates all the other four states of existence (as stated in the opening stanzas of verse no. 3), but in actual practice it is perpetually a completely neutral state, and anything that is profoundly and eternally neutral cannot be said to have bias towards any one or the other thing. Since there is no reversal of this state of Turiyatit, i.e. once a man reaches this transcendental state of existence he would not go back to the other four states of existence, he would not be aware of the gross world and his gross organs as done in the Jagrat state, he would not dream as in the Swapna state, he would not be in the temporary state of rest in the Sushupta state which is a transient state as the creature oscillates between the Sushupta and Swapna states while asleep, and he would not even have any junior level of spiritual evolvment as exemplified by the Turiya state which is higher than the Sushupta state but lower than the Turiyatit state. This is because he has reached the highest point in his spiritual journey and has reached its pinnacle or citadel. There is no existence beyond it; it is the supreme state in which the consciousness can ever expect to exist. Hence, it is honoured by the epithet ‘Param’—one that is supreme and beyond which there is nothing.

Since the eternal and truthful Atma (here referring the cosmic form of the Atma known as Consciousness, rather than the Atma that lives inside the body of the individual creature as its Jiva-Atma) is the only conscious and living entity that exists in all of these states of existence, it is deemed to be the only one witness of their presence. [The gross body ceases to exist in the other states except the Jagrat state. The subtle body consisting of the mind ceases to exist in the Sushupta state. The causal body that harbours the individual’s Atma ceases to exist when the creature dies and leaves the gross body. So, none of them are eternal. The Atma itself, though it is eternal and immaculate by nature, becomes mired in the delusions of the world, allows itself to be engrossed in doing so many deeds and suffering from their consequences, having various desires and assuming so many roles. Hence, it is also not apparently steady. In this scenario, the only entity that remains constant and unchanging is the Parmatma, the supreme form of the individual Atma which is also known as Brahm. That is also why the latter is called the Absolute Truth—because the latter does not change.]

Since the Parmatma represents that superior aspect of the cosmic Consciousness that is absolutely neutral and detached from everything, including Maya (delusions), it is beyond the purview of the four normal states of conscious

existence of a creature. The Atma living in the Turiyatit state is called a Parmatma. In this state, it cannot be called a 'Drasta' of anything, or the one who sees anything, observes anything, or is a witness to anything—because this is a completely neutral and detached state of existence in which the mind and all the other faculties are defunct, and in which nothing matters for the super-conscious Atma¹.

In such a case, should one regard the Jiva (the living being) as the Drasta? [That is, if the Parmatma is not the Drasta or the one who sees, observes and witnesses anything because of its sublime existence and neutral character, then can one treat the creature that has a gross existence as the seer, observer and witness?] No, this is also not the case because a creature has the notion of being a sufferer or enjoyer of things, of being a doer of deeds, and has ego and pride in him. How can he remain neutral and see, observe and witness things dispassionately? A creature is bound to be biased towards one thing and inclined against the other. This is not the proper way of seeing things—for the eye sees everything upon which its sight falls and it cannot decide what to eliminate and what to accept from the general view before it. So when the creature begins to distinguish between things, seeing one thing and neglecting the other, he is not being an honest Drasta. On the other hand, the Parmatma that lives in the transcendental state of Turiyatit is untouched by these faults that affect the Jiva.

Now suppose it is said that the Jiva's (living being's) true nature is not to remain involved in worldly affairs as it is the Atma which is pure consciousness that is equivalent to the cosmic Consciousness called the Parmatma, then this logic also does not hold its ground of validity. This is because as soon as the Atma assumes a gross body, it is immediately shrouded in ego and pride of having this body. It is almost impossible to find a living being or a Jiva who would not accept that he has a body. In fact, the very concept of Jiva rests on the premise that the Atma has a body. Therefore, if this notion of being a possessor of a body is done away with it is only then that the Jiva becomes equivalent to the Parmatma.

In other words, the difference between a Jiva and the Parmatma is just like the difference between the Ghatakash and the Mahakash. [The Ghatakash is the space present inside a hollow pitcher, and the Mahakash is the vast open sky outside the vessel. The Ghatakash is separated from the Mahakash by the physical body of the pitcher. Actually there is no distinction between the space inside and outside the pitcher, for if the vessel is broken the two spaces coalesce instantly and effortlessly.] The two names of the same thing are given only in an abstract manner for the purpose of study, for in actuality there is no difference. So therefore, a Jiva has a distinct existence only as long as it has the body—or is conscious that it has the body, and as soon as this awareness of the body is removed, the two—the Jiva and the Parmatma—become one.

[Another instance is cited now.] The same breath moves out and in the body as exhalation and inhalation. While doing so, it makes two distinct sounds—'Ha' and 'Sa' respectively. That is, while moving out the sound is equivalent to 'Ha', and when moving in the sound is 'Sa'. This forms the Mantra 'Hans', meaning a divine Swan. In other words, the Jiva's Pran or vital winds also display artificial distinction as being exhaled breath and inhaled breath though the air is the same uniform entity. A wise, self-realised and enlightened ascetic understands the esoteric message in this sound of Hans. He realises that the breath is telling him that he is like the divine bird Swan which is regarded as the purest and the wisest amongst the birds². So, a wise ascetic always concentrates upon his pure and enlightened form known as the Atma that has no physical body like this wind or air element which too has no physical body.

With this sublime and eclectic spiritual view firmly established in his inner self, the enlightened ascetic discards all sense of ego and pride vis-à-vis the body. And when this happens, he becomes one with the Parmatma (as explained above) (4).

[Note—¹The word ‘Drasta’ means one who sees, observes something. It is the mind that registers any sight that is seen, or any other perception for that matter, in order to enable the man to actually see or perceive the particular thing. For instance, a man might be gazing at something continuously but he might not be actually seeing it because his mind is lost in some other thoughts. In the present case when we refer to an ascetic in the Turiyatit state of existence we find that he is so much absorbed in meditation and reflection upon the truth of the Atma, his pure consciousness, and remains submerged in its thoughts and the bliss derived from it that he is totally oblivious about the surroundings. So, he lives in a perpetual trance, and though he might beg for food or take a bath in the river, actually, at the mental level, he is not doing anything at all. If one asks him anything about his actions, his answer naturally would be in the negative, and in this he would be speaking the actual truth.

This also explains the difference between the Turiya and the Turiyatit states. The living being who has vestiges of awareness left in him, even of the fact that he is an ascetic or a Sanyasi, or the fact that he is enlightened and wise, may have risen above the rest of the creatures and live in a Turiya state of trance-like existence that resembles Turiyatit state, but he has not achieved truthful success. That comes when he reaches the Turiyatit state of complete unawareness and neutrality—or a state of ‘non-knowledge’. Obviously, a man who has no true knowledge of anything would not be able to see or hear or feel or taste or smell anything, simply because he does not know what these things mean or from where they originate or how to perceive them or distinguish between any two of them. This state is the truthful Turiyatit state. The Atma that lives in this eclectic transcendental state is the superior Atma called the ‘Parmatma’. It is exemplarily neutral and dispassionate. It does not see and bear witness to any thing or event. It is not concerned with anything. Hence it is called a non-Drasta—one who does not see.

²The concept of Hans and the Mantra ‘Hans’ has been described in a number of Upanishads. The enlightened and realised person thinks of himself as a Swan and feels exhilarated that he is not an ordinary man bogged down by worldly fetters, but an exalted soul that is like a Swan.

The bird Swan or Hans is considered the most pure, clean, wise, erudite and clever among the birds. It is said to eat pearls, which means it picks up and accepts only the best amid the variety of things available to it in the form of an assortment of various gems and jewels representing the dazzling charms of this world. It is also reputed to drink milk leaving aside the water content in it symbolising its ability to imbibe the essence and the best, and leave the rest aside. It is also the vehicle of Goddess Saraswati, the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, speech and learning, indicating that it bears these glorious virtues. Hence, the reference to a swan while describing a creature conscious of the vital wind or Pran passing through him means the basic, inherent and intrinsic tendency of that wisened and intelligent creature is to be the best, most pure and divine, wise, awakened and enlightened, adroit, clever and sagacious like the swan, and pick all the goodness and

forsake all that is bad in this world. Saraswati rides on a swan, symbolising the creature's inborn enlightenment and excellence of his mental caliber. Symbolically, Saraswati resides in his Pran because it rides on the swan, i.e. in his heart, throat and mind—that is, his heart has purity of emotions, he speaks well of all, and his wise words are sought after by all as priceless gems of wisdom, and his mind is intelligent, discerning and noble. A wise man is expected to pick the truth from amongst the basket of assorted charms present in this creation, and leave aside the non-truths.

The alphabet 'Ha' of the word 'Hans' is sounded by the vibration of the exhaled wind passing through the vocal cords present in the throat or the wind pipe which connects to the nose, while the alphabet 'Sa' is sounded by the root of the tongue which opens into the mouth when the breath is inhaled. Both the nose and the mouth open in the same cavity called the throat. Hence, the inter relationship between 'Ha' and 'Sa' is evident. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is like the divine swan, but he was unaware of his own divinity and sublimity, his exalted and noble stature, till that was pointed out to him. So he must become one like a 'swan', remind himself constantly that he is like a swan, and he must not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan.

During the twenty-four hour period covering a single day and night, a person inhales and exhales, or breathes, roughly twenty-one thousand times, because each cycle of inhalation and exhalation is equivalent to saying one Mantra 'Hans' consisting of the two syllables 'Ha and Sa' (refer Dhyānbindu Upanishad, verse no. 63).

References for Hans—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyān Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-132, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 35-36, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hansopanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93.]

The *Turiyateet Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes in detail the characteristic features of spiritual aspirants who have reached this most exalted state of existence of the Atma.

The *Annapurna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 25 very succinctly describes what the higher state of transcendental existence known as Turiyateet is as follows—

“When one develops this eclectic vision of life and creation (or existence), he is able to access Mukti (liberation and deliverance) while he is alive and has a gross body. That is, though he has a body but for all practical purposes he is deemed to be liberated from its shackling affects; he is deemed to be free from the limitations imposed on him by the grossness of the body.

[Such a realises that his 'true self' is the pure conscious Atma that is a sublime and subtle entity that is quite different from the gross body, as the latter is merely a

habitat of the former. This self-realised and enlightened man can be doing all the deeds required of him in this world but still remain free from all bondages and encumbrances because he has developed the wisdom to understand that the deeds are being done by the body and not his ‘true self’ which is the Atma, the pure consciousness, and hence ‘he’ remains a mere spectator of what the body does. Besides this, he has also realised that the world is an imaginary thing of the mind, that it is entrapping and deluding by its inherent nature, and so anyone who is wise would have nothing to do with anything that is untrue and entrapping. Therefore it is well to avoid this trap. He has no expectations of any rewards or punishments from the deeds, he has no target for doing the deeds—for he simply does them because it is his duty and assigned to him by the Supreme Being who is the Lord of all creatures. With this eclectic and highly evolved spiritual way of thinking, he does not get involved in the deeds or in any of the demands for gratifications of the body and its sense organs. Thus no consequences accrue for him for doing deeds. For him, the body simply does not exist, and therefore the world also does not exist because the latter is directly related to the former.

This sublime thought process is a de-facto ‘Mukti’ for the aspirant as he has freed himself from the bondages of the body and the demands of its sense organs, as well as the world of sense objects and its attendant delusions and entangling web.]

This state of the mind and the sub-conscious is called ‘Turiyateet Mukti’ or the transcendental state of existence.

[This is because in the Turiyateet state of existence of the consciousness, which can be said to be the state of ‘super-consciousness’, the mind thinks of nothing; it is in a neutral state. In its wake, the ‘self’ too becomes neutral and established in the Turiyateet state because it was the mind that had been nagging the ‘self’ or the Atma of the creature with so many inputs and demands that the ‘self’ just could not find time to rest and find its peace. With the mind out of the scene, the ‘self’ or the Atma reverts to its primary state of existence which is inherently calm and neutral. The ‘self’ or the Atma therefore lives in the Turiyateet state when the mind enters this state of existence.] (25).”

The *brain has two components*—the intellect and the mind. The former is under the direct control of the Atma while the mind is subordinate to the intellect. The mind receives worldly stimuli through the sense organs, passes them to the intellect, obtains instructions from the intellect and passes them on to the organs of action —this state prevails when the man is ‘awake’.

Now, when he is asleep, there are two stages—either he dreams or he does not. During the ‘dreams state’, the inherent Vasanas (the hidden passions, yearning and desires) come into play at the sub-conscious level and the mind lives up to all those Vasanas in an imaginary world. But when there is no dream, i.e. during the ‘deep sleep state’ of consciousness, the Atma is freed from interference and it reverts back to its original form of being ‘nothingness, having no feelings and no emotions’, just like the case wherein the mirror is removed from the front of a man and his image vanishes from it and the image reverts back into its primary source or object, which in this case is the man himself whose image was formed in the mirror. The Atma is an image of the supreme Brahma. When the mirror of the mind-intellect is removed, it (Atma) reverts back into its primary form which is Brahma whereas it related itself with the world when the mind-intellect was in active mode. So, the aspect of ‘sleep’ discussed in this section is the ‘deep sleep state of consciousness’, because it is in this

state that the creature comes in direct contact of his true identity or true self, which is called Atma or pure consciousness. The creature is 'delinked or uncoupled' from the external world while sound asleep.

For the external world, a sleeping man is as good as being dead. For example, if a sleeping man is attacked by someone, he won't resist; he won't even know what has happened just in front of him while he was asleep. He is not medically or conventionally regarded as dead, but for all practical purposes 'he is as good as dead'. He neither feels pain nor happiness when in a deep sleep state of existence, which is beyond the dream state of sleep. The 'deep sleep state' is also called 'Swapraant' (स्वप्नान्त), literally meaning to be in one's own territory, to dwell in one's natural habitat. In this state, the gross body consisting of the sense organs and the subtle body consisting of the mind-intellect complex remain shutoff, and the Atma residing in the causal body remains absolutely calm and peaceful and oblivious of the turmoil of the external mundane world. To be in this state perpetually is the natural habit and nature of the Atma, and therefore it finds this state its natural habitat. It is like being in a state of suspended animation or a self-imposed state of coma when the creature remains indifferent to what is happening around it and instead remains cocooned in its own shell. It is like a state of being virtually dead, or coming to a stage voluntarily which is almost like being dead, but is not actual death.

During the Turiya state (i.e. the 4th state) of existence of the consciousness, the Atma lives uniformly in all the other three states, viz. the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleeping. It is not limited to one or the other state, and therefore would display all the signs that are unique to each of these states taken separately as well as in a composite manner. In the Turiya state therefore the man would display the combined character traits that are the result of a combination of all the individual traits of these three states of existence. Beyond this is the Turiyateet state (i.e. the 5th state) in which the Atma goes beyond the restrictions and limitations of the other four states and becomes free from any of their encumbrances. This is a state in which Brahm exists and his realisation is possible. It is the pinnacle of spiritual pursuits, the highest rung that one can climb before all spiritual achievements bear fruit, and which would enable the aspirant to come face to face with Brahm, i.e. become Brahm-realised, to witness and experience Brahm first hand.

The *Turiyateet Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes in detail the characteristic features of spiritual aspirants who have reached this most exalted state of existence of the Atma.

The *Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 149-151 says that the four states of existence of consciousness is symbolic of the dominance of the vital life giving Pran in the four areas of the body as follows—(a) the 'Jagrat' state or waking state relates to the area of the body between the navel and the heart; (b) the 'Swapna' or dreaming state of consciousness relates to the area of the body in the region of the throat; (c) the 'Sushupta' or deep sleep state of consciousness relates to the middle of the eyebrows and the forehead; and (d) the 'Turiya' state of consciousness relates to the area on the top of the head where the Brahm Randhra is situated. In this context, the fifth state would be when the Pran escapes from the body by piercing through the Brahm Randhra, thereby giving the spiritual aspirant permanent liberation and deliverance from the bondage of the gross body. This is the 'Turiya Teet' state of blessedness of the Atma or soul. Refer also Amrit Naad

Upanishad, verse no. 27, and Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/12-93/15 of Krishna Yajur Veda.

(B) The 7 states of existence—these have been described in Mahopanishad, canto 5, verse nos. 8-20 of Sam Veda tradition. Briefly they are the following—(i) ‘Beej Jagrat’ (the elementary waking state of consciousness), (ii) ‘Jagrat’ (or normal waking state of consciousness), (iii) ‘Maha Jagrat’ (or a greater waking state), (iv) ‘Jagrat Swapna’ (or a state in which a person is misled to erroneously believe in anything while he is wide awake in this world; literally meaning to ‘day dream’, or dream of imaginary things while a man is wide awake), (v) ‘Swapna’ (or a dreaming state of consciousness), (vi) ‘Swapna-Jagrat’ (or a state when a person’s dreams last long enough to influence him and he lives in his dreams so much so that they affect his mind while he is awake), (vii) ‘Sushupta’ (or the deep sleep state of consciousness).

These seven states of existence of the consciousness interact with each other in numerous permutations and combinations to result in its innumerable forms and shapes. Now listen to their individual characteristics.

Now let us examine what role the mind and brain play in these various states of existence. The mind has two parts—viz. the conscious and the sub-conscious. The conscious part of the mind consists of only five percent of the total mental life of a man, while the rest, i.e. ninety five percent, consists of the sub-conscious. During the waking state of conscious, the rational mind or the conscious mind works, while the inputs that are gathered during the waking state are stored in the memory bank of the sub-conscious and they come into play when the man is sleeping. The dream is actually the sub-conscious mind playing out what it has learnt during waking state of the mind. The dream more often than not tells the man what he does not realise or does not pay attention to during his waking state; they are in fact the attempt of the mind to bring to our attention what we have been neglecting during the waking state of the mind.

The concept of dream has been elaborately explained in *Brihad Aranyak Upanishad* in Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 9—13 and 16.

Sigmund Freud believed that every action is motivated by our ‘unconscious’, and that dreams are a way of wish fulfilment in civilised society where people have to repress their urges. According to him, some of these urges and fantasies could be quite ridiculous and shocking, and hence the mind releases these pent up feelings in the symbolic language of the dream. Freud divided the mind into three parts or sections—viz. the ID (the unconscious centered on primal urges and desires), the Ego (concerned with the conscious and rational aspect of the self; it negotiates with the ID while keeping a reality check on urges and desires), and the Super-ego (which includes our conscious and the moral aspects of the self that we pick up from around us). Thus he said that dreams are a way in which the ID speaks out when our conscious mind is asleep.

The ‘sleeping state’, with an emphasis on the dream phase has been elaborately explained in *Brihad Aranyak Upanishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, Brahman 1, verse nos. 17-20 as well as Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 9-13, 16.

During the ‘waking state’, the Atma acts through the gross body (the physical body) of a man in its interaction with the outside world. During the ‘dream state of existence’, the Atma withdraws from the gross body and limits its interaction to the subtle body (the mind-intellect complex). During the ‘deep sleep state of existence’,

the Atma withdraws itself into the causal body which is surrounded by various ‘Vasanas’ (inherent passions and desires) and ‘Vrittis’ (inherent tendencies and inclinations). But the pure consciousness, when it plunges within itself, that is, inside the causal body called the bliss sheath, it attains absolute bliss. This is called the 4th state called ‘Turiya state of existence’, and it is obtained by ascetics during Samadhi (a trance like state) when all the three sheaths covering the soul —food/air, mind/intellect and bliss —are removed. With the removal of these various sheaths, the Atma/soul of the individual (which is pure microcosmic consciousness) merges itself with the vast space around it (called the macrocosmic consciousness) because all separating sheaths have been done away with.

This combination of ‘waker-dreamer-deep sleeper’ states of consciousness of a man is called Microcosm. The pure consciousness has its independent existence from the above three states, and this independence is called the 4th state of consciousness called the ‘Turiya state’ or the eternal blissful state of consciousness, called ‘Chidanand’, which has the bliss sheath as its external boundary.

According to *Hanso-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda, the Atma resides in the heart of the creature which is in an 8-petal lotus. The tendrils (known as “Kesar” in Sanskrit) of this lotus described in this Upanishad represent the waking state of consciousness, the stalk (the “Karnika”) represents the dream state of conscious, and the thalamus represents the deep sleep state of consciousness. When a creature abandons/discards the metaphoric habitat or dwelling in the 8-petal lotus represents by his heart and rises above its precincts (just like a householder snapping all his relationships with his home and takes to the path of Vanprastha), it obtains the forth state of consciousness called the ‘Turiya state’. Eventually, when the creature, in the form of his subtle Atma (which according to the definition given to it by the Upanishad, inter alia, is ‘Hansa’ which means a ‘Swan’ and is a metaphor for divinity, purity and wisdom) merges with or dissolves in the cosmic ‘Naad’ (all-pervading subtle sound in the cosmos), then the final or the so-called ‘Turiyateet’ stage is achieved (verse no. 8).

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Appendix: no. 3

Mantra and Japa

In this Appendix we shall study the concept of a ‘Mantra’, and doing “Japa” with it. For convenience, the discussion is divided into two following heads: (A) Mantra, and (B) Japa.

Under the head ‘Mantra’, we shall study the following topics:

- (i) What are Mantras?
- (ii) Components of Mantras
- (iii) Beej or seed or root Mantra and Maatrika of a Mantra
- (iv) Who is eligible to receive a Mantra?
- (v) Anga Nyas and Kar Nyas with Mantras
- (vi) Doing Nyas of a Yantra (a worship instrument)
- (vii) The Melan Mantra
- (viii) The Tarak Mantra

(i) What are Mantras?

In a lay-man’s language, as we have seen, Mantras are either a single letter, a syllable or a group of letters or syllables forming a word, a group of words, even a phrase or a short statement— which we can call a ‘spiritual formulae’. They are a unique and potentially uplifting, energy-charged thought currents. These currents are transformed into words to make them useable and accessible. For the purpose of God-realisation (or realisation of the supreme Brahm), these Mantras are used in meditation repeatedly to help concentrate the mind. These are called Mantras because by proper contemplation on their import, they are able to remove the inner obstacles and facilitate realisation. They are catalysts or mediums for realisation. They help in reaching of the supreme Advaitic ideal of identifying the Atma with the Brahm, the individual self with the universal Self. The Mantras are the vehicles used during Japa (repetition of the holy name of the Lord) also.

The Atharva Veda’s *Hayagriva Upanishad*, verse nos. 18-19 tell us how the Mantras should be repeated during Japa, and the importance of the Mantras in helping the spiritual aspirant reach the ecstasy of spiritual realisation by citing the example of the snake and the sound of the Indian lute.

“verse no. 18 = The Mantras should be pronounced clearly by employing the lips, the nose, the teeth, etc. [This is because some class of letters are pronounced by the involvement of the lips, such as Sanskrit letters ‘Pa’ (as in pump), ‘Pha’ (as in fruit), ‘Ba’ (as in bulb) etc.; others require the involvement of the nose, such as the letters ‘Na’ (as in nut), or the teeth, as in the case of the letter ‘Da’ (as in then), or the tongue as in the case of the other letters such as ‘Ta’ (as in two, teeth) and ‘Cha’ (as in choke) etc.]

The Mantras should be said continuously, in an unbroken stream of words and letters so that they appear to be like a wheel in motion. The worshipper should offer his prayers to Ishan (the Lord, the Supreme Being) in this way.

[It ought to be noted here that while verse nos. 16-17 emphasis that the Gods offer their prayers to the Supreme Being in a series of sounds, viz. like the neighing of a horse, the man is supposed to offer the same prayer of the Vedas in articulate language. This is the case if he is not an expert in classical forms of music so that he can sing the hymns in the typical way the Gods had sung them. So such a worshipper articulately pronounces the words of the hymns. But the continuous pronouncing gives the Mantra a subtle hue of music because of the rhythm and tone involved in the incantation.

‘Ishan’ means an emblem (‘Nishan’) of the Lord (‘Isha’). The implication is simple—when a worshipper offers prayers or obeisance to Lord Hayagriva or even his own Atma, he is actually honouring the Supreme Being known as ‘Brahm’. All other forms and deities to whom worship is offered are actually emblems of Brahm; they stand for Brahm.] (18).

“verse no. 19 = The creator and controller of this creation has established this great system of Mantras. He has enabled even the serpent to understand the language of music as is evident from the fact that by playing the Indian lute the serpent can be controlled as it is completely overwhelmed and enthralled by its music.

[The music emanating from the lute has no words, but it is sufficient to enchant the serpent. The serpent understands the music and gets so ecstatic that if the lute is played expertly it would raise its hood and sway from side to side in joy. The same music will mean nothing to the man or any other animal. It is believed that it is very easy to control even the most ferocious snake with the help of certain Mantras when they accompany the playing of the lute.

The snake actually does not understand what song is being played on the lute, but the frequencies generated by sound of this instrument are sufficient to massage its nerves to such an extent that the sense of ecstasy and exhilaration is aroused in the reptile.

The idea being conveyed here is that though one may not know the meaning of the Mantras fully, though he may not be an expert in the science of Mantras, or know the intricacies of metaphysics and spiritualism, but still if he repeats some given set of Mantras they are bound to produce their positive effects upon him even though he may be unaware of them, or he may be enjoying these benefits unwittingly.

There is one other significance of citing the case of the Indian lute vis-à-vis the serpent. The serpent is made ecstatic only by the sound or the music of this instrument, and it pays no heed to any other musical instrument. Therefore, if one were to attain Brahm and understand the potentials of his Atma, he must use the correct Mantra and follow the correct path as envisaged by the Upanishads. Wrong Mantra repeated wrongly will produce no effects like the serpent is not aroused by any other musical instrument except the Indian lute.]

This ‘wheel’ represented by the continuous chanting or singing of the Mantras is represented by the symbolic halo around the Sun that consists of its brilliant rays, and around the Gods that represent their divinity and holiness. [In other words, if the Mantras are incanted properly in the prescribed manner, the person also develops a halo of holiness around himself.] (19).

Atharva Veda's *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 12-13 describe the concept of 'Mantra' elaborately. Let us see how this concept is explained by this Upanishad in the context of the Mantras of Lord Ram—

“Verse no. 12 = Whatever deeds and actions an aspirant or seeker does or undertakes to do to achieve his goal are successful through the medium of a Mantra. The Mantra is a medium by which desired results are easily and comfortably attained; they are aids to one's fulfilment of desires and objectives in life—whether mundane or spiritual. A Mantra makes the attainment of the desired goal a certainty.

A Mantra indicates the result or rewards that can be expected by using it just like a certain ingredient in a medicine can indicate in advance what one can expect by the use of that particular formulation. [This is because each Mantra is like a mathematical formula, and each hymn is like an equation. Even as definitive results follow the use of certain pre-determined formula and equation in scientific quest or mathematical calculations, definitive results are also expected by employing specific Mantras for doing Japa (repetition) or Yoga (meditation) and Dhyan (contemplation) with specific objectives in mind.]

The word Mantra is derived from two words—the first word is 'Manan' which means to persistently remember something so as to make the mind firmly rooted in it, to ponder and contemplate upon it, to deeply think about it and meditate on it so that one can arrive at some certain conclusion about the truth of that particular thing, while the second word 'Traan' means to give freedom and protection from some kind of torment or miserable condition, to deliver someone from his miseries and predicaments etc. Hence, a Mantra is an instrument by the help of which a person can find spiritual liberation and deliverance from his worldly torments and miseries. This is achieved by concentrating upon the Mantra, by relying upon its mystical powers and spiritual potentials, and using it to do meditation and contemplation. Constant repetition of the Mantra helps to multiply its effect and reinforce its earlier benefits.

[Repetition of the Mantra is necessary for its full benefits to accrue and take effect. It's just like the case of a patient having to repeat a medicine over a long period of time to get rid of some chronic disease. If he stops taking it before the disease is completely routed, then not only would the disease relapse but it would do so with a vengeance. Another example can be cited about a man's skills and expertise in a professional field—if he discontinues using his knowledge and skills after some time in life, he forgets about them and gets out of tune. All the long years he had spent acquiring the knowledge and the special skill go to a waste if they are not practiced for a lifetime. Similarly, repetition of Mantras and practice of meditation is a life-long process, and a wise man should persevere with them.] (12).

“Verse no. 13 = The Mantra of a deity is a complete representation of that deity.”

Mantra is a group of mystical letters or syllables or words or phrases that are used as an aid to concentrate and steady the mind and focus one's energy towards the successful completion of the process of Yoga. It is the sound symbol embodying the form, the power and the consciousness of the supreme Brahm or its various manifestations as the deities worshipped.

But it must be emphasised here that even as any formula— whether in the realm of science or mathematics—is useful only when the student understands its meaning and application, the Mantras too, being spiritual formulas themselves, would

be beneficial only when their meaning and import are fully understood. Though, off course, even as learning by rote can enable a student to mug up Chapters of a book to pass an examination without being able to answer one single question based on reasoning on the same subject that he has parroted, so the Mantras do have their impact when repeated blindly, but the benefit is only superficial. It is better than nothing but is not wholesome; they don't lead to self awakening as such. The Mantras are the vehicle which the aspirant uses to travel from the plane of the world to spiritual plane because Mantras can be repeated even while a person goes on with his daily chores, but his subconscious mind dwells not on the objects of the world but on the objects of the divine. In due course of time, this has a profound psychological impact on the aspirant. Gradually he seems to identify himself more with the divine principles than with the humdrum worldly principles. The seeker/aspirant gradually veers himself away from worldly entanglements and engages himself with spiritual discipline. First it's external and then it becomes internal. Even as a medicine taken over a long period of time eradicates a disease, the constant repetition of the Mantras tend to scrub his subconscious clean of all negative traits and replace them with divine traits.

The science of various Mantras was derived from the profundity about the ethereal and sublime knowledge of the universal and omnipresent cosmic sound. The specific structure or configuration of letters and syllables of a Mantra can be regarded as coded compilation of great spiritual doctrines or a cryptic metaphysical formulae of great import; the rhythmic chanting or repeating of which with due diligence, dedication, mental concentration, consistent and persistent pace and practice generates specific energy currents present in the cosmic ether in the form of the cosmic sound.

First let us understand the sonic power of some of the basic vowel sounds used in the scriptures and which form part of Mantras. The various combinations of these vowel sounds have as many special effects and create as many energy sources as are possible by their various permutations and combinations. Each syllable or letter of a Mantra stands for a particular aspect of this energy field, which the scriptures prefer to call 'God'. The 'Akshamalika Upanishad of Rig Veda' has bestowed and empowered each alphabet with divine and spiritual powers and threaded them together in a string called the 'prayer rosary'.

Some of the basic vowel sounds of Sanskrit/Hindi and their effects are enumerated as follows :-

(i) A (अ / a A a) —Pronouncing this vowel has a direct effect on the heart. The pumping of the heart and the supply of pure blood in the body is supported by this sound. Repeated loud pronunciation at regulated amplitude helps to regulate pure blood supply to the body and keep the heart tuned. It possesses creative powers.

(ii) Aa (आ / ā Ā ā) —The sound of this vowel effects the chest and upper parts of the lungs. It strengthens ribs, helps clean the digestive canal and energises the mind because to pronounce it, the mouth has to be opened wide, enabling fresh air laden with oxygen to enter the body and oxidize the tissues.

(iii) E and Ee (इ / i I i // ई / ī Ī ī) —Pronunciation of the short and long sound of the 3rd and 4th vowels have a direct effect on the throat, almost like a gargle. It cleanses the upper chamber of the respiratory tract as well as the alimentary canal. It helps to relieve headaches.

(iv) U or Oo (उ / u U u // ऊ / ū Ū ū) —The short and long vowel sound of 'Oo' have direct effect on the organs in the middle and lower part of the body (i.e.

abdomen) —e.g. liver, stomach, lower intestine and bowels because abdominal muscles are used to pronounce it. Constipation is relieved by prolonged pronunciation of this vowel sound.

(v) Ae and Aye (ए / ा e E ē // ऐ / ा ai Ai ai) —These two vowel sounds effect the kidney and the junction of the throat and the respiratory tract. It can relieve renal disease. It softens vocal cords, hence it is useful for those who use the voice much —e.g. teachers, singers, orators etc.

(vi) O and Ao (ओ / ा o O ō // औ / ा au Au au) —This vowel sound effects the genitals and the central part of the chest.

(vii) Ang (अं [ⁿ] / Aṁ = ṁ Ṃ) —This is an ‘anuswar’ represented by a ‘dot’ placed on the top of a letter; it is pronounced by opening and closing the throat. The oxygen inhaled when the mouth is open and fresh air is trapped inside the body helps in oxidizing the RBC (red blood corpuscles) which, in turn, oxidizes the tissue.

(viii) Aha (अः / Aḥ = ḥ Ḥ) —The is called a ‘sarga’ and is depicted by two dots equivalent to a ‘colon punctuation mark of English’. Pronunciation of this vowel sound titillates the tongue and the upper part of the palate. It regulates secretions of hormones which in turn regulate the various functions of the body.

Vocal sound and five elements:- Prof. Dobson has hypothesized that the primary speech of the human race must have originated using these vowel sounds. The ‘wind’ is a medium for propagation of sound. Air controls the type or genre, quality, amplitude and tune of sound— as is evident from a whistle, a flute or a mouth organ. The ‘water’ is also a medium of propagating sound as is done by marine creatures and some musical instruments using water such as the ‘Jal Tarang’. The relation of sound with ‘fire’ consisting of light and heat as its elementary constituents is evident in the functioning of the tono-meter, spectro-meter and thermo-meter. Its subtle effect on the mind is an example of ‘heated exchange of words’ during an argument. The ‘space’ element and its relationship with sound are evidenced by music and the cosmic ‘Naad’.

Benjamin Lee Whorf, an American scholar and chemical engineer, researched the psychological aspects of language and published his findings. ‘The idea, entirely unfamiliar to the modern world, that nature and language are inwardly akin, was for ages well known to various high cultures. In India, one aspect of it has been the idea of the Mantra and formed an art form called the ‘Art of Mantra Chanting’. On the simplest cultural level, a Mantra is merely an incantation of primitive magic, such as the crudest cultures have. In high culture it may have a different, intellectual meaning, dealing with the inner affinity of language and the cosmic order. At a still higher level, it becomes Mantra Yoga. Therein the Mantra becomes a manifold of conscious patterns, contrived to assist the consciousness into the nominal pattern world, whereupon it is ‘in the driver’s seat’. It can set the human organism to transmit, control and amplify thousand-fold forces which that organism normally transmits only at unobservable low intensities.’

The space or sky is the habitat of the cosmos; even our earth is nothing more than a speck or a grain of sand in this vast cosmos. Since the cosmos is filled with ether, which is completely infused with ‘Naad’, we are completely drenched by it, completely submerged in it. The ether is a gigantic ocean of sound waves. Sound is also the first source of energy; its combination with light lies at the root of generation of different types of energy currents and particles of matter.

In a more practical term, our body represents that vast cosmos. The space inside the skin made of earth is filled with water, air and fire. When we speak, our vocal cords create the cosmic 'Naad' in its microcosmic form, and we call it speech.

The scriptures affirm that OM, the sublime sound, is the source of all creation which has its base in it. The word OM is said to be the base/foundation and the basis/origin of all Mantras because Mantras consist of letters and syllables, and these are various forms that sound takes. Since sound has its origin in the 'Naad', hence OM is the 'seed or root' of all the Mantras. All syllables, letters, Mantras and words have emanated from the vibrations of the primordial sound called the 'Naad'.

(ii) Components of Mantras

The Mantras consists of (i) Vowels which are continuous sounds and (ii) Consonants which are interruptions of those sounds. The consonants cannot be pronounced without the vowels. As we know, sound travels in waves, and when similar waves of the same frequency overlap each other, they gain tremendous strength and are magnified. The super imposition of compatible waves or vibration have profound effect, and that is why chanting of the Mantras in chorus as done in Kirtan or recitation of Mantras during ancient fire sacrifices creates specific sound vibrations which can dispel negative energy and have great impact on the environment.

There are two theories regarding the various components of a Mantra--one says that the Mantra has five components while the other ascribe six components to all Mantras. Now let us see both of them.

The five components of Mantra are the following:- (i) Rishi, (ii) Chanda, (iii) Devta (God), (iv) Bija/Beej (root, seed) and (v) Tatva (essence, gist).

(i) The *Rishi* of a Mantra is the sage or 'seer' who had first visualised a particular Mantra as a divine formula having stupendous spiritual and mystical powers and potentials. He was the one who was the first person who had envisioned a particular metaphysical concept during one of his meditative trances.

The 'Rishi' of any given Mantra is the one who conceived the Mantra, understood its meaning, applied it in practice and verified its powers and potentials, and then expounded upon it and propagated it by means of preaching it to his or her disciple.

He or she had first visualised or conceived this Mantra, he is the one who had first discovered this mystical formula, then determined and verified its astounding mystical and divine authority, majestic potentials, glorious spiritual powers, and proved its efficacy not only in the sphere of metaphysics and spiritualism but also in more materialistic terms as having certain mysterious powers, which when properly harnessed, could give worldly rewards or benefits to the user of these mystical Mantras. He had tested the effectiveness and potential powers of the esoteric Mantra, and then given it the status of a holy and divine mystical formula which can enable the worshipper to attain desired results. Such divine and eclectic revelations were made known to the rest of the world in the form of hymns composed in various poetical composition styles called Chandas.

Hence, the Rishi of a Mantra is the one who had first conceptualised it, who had first discovered it, who had first composed its hymns and witnessed its powerful might first hand. He tested the mystical powers of this hymn and then taught about it

to his disciples for their welfare. Therefore, the Rishi is the first exponent of a particular Mantra as well as its first teacher and preacher. He is honoured for this by first remembering him when worshipping a chosen deity through a particular Mantra in order to pay homage to his memory and seek his blessings. He was like a modern day scientist who does long research and arrives at some astounding discovery and tests its truthfulness and effectiveness in practical terms. Then that discovery is named after him.

For example, in *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Brahma the old patriarch of visible creation is said to be the 'Rishi' of the Mantras dedicated to Lord Dakshin Mukhi (i.e. Lord Shiva as a personification of Brahm). Verse no. 32 of this Upanishad clearly asserts that it was Brahma who had first worshipped the supreme transcendental Brahm at the beginning of creation with these hymns called Mantras in order to start the process of creation. Hence, he is the Rishi of these Mantras.

“Verse no. 32 = At the beginning of creation, the grandfather of creation Prajapati Brahma had worshipped this Supreme Being (by using the hymns called Mantras as enumerated in this Upanishad) to empower himself to initiate the process of creation. It was due to this worship that he got sufficient energy and strength to go about the arduous task of creation and fulfill his ambition of creating this world. This made him fulfilled and happy because he was successful in his desires. That is why Prajapati Brahma is deemed to be his original worshipper (32).”

The Mantra was prescribed as a divine mystical formula that could be used for doing Japa (repetition of some spiritual formula that can give the seeker the benefits that he seeks), as a mystical formula to be used during formal religious fire sacrificial rituals, as a means to concentrate the mind and intellect on the divinity during meditation and contemplation, and as esoteric and magical charm to be used as cryptic symbols of certain occult forms of worship where charm instruments, called the Yantra, are used to invoke divine blessings and intercession.

Thus, they rendered the otherwise mere neutral letter or group of letters into something divine and sublime, and infused it with supernatural powers, bestowing them with their renowned importance, significance and value. Therefore, the name of this particular sage or seer was invoked along with the invocation of the Mantra to honour his contribution as is the practice even in modern times when chemicals and formulae and various other scientific discoveries such as stars, comets, galaxies, distant black holes etc., or new concepts in physics, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy and other sciences are named after the scientist who first discovered them.

The difference between a Rishi and a Muni is that the latter did not divulge their realisation but preferred to keep their spiritual discoveries to themselves as the word 'Muni' is derived from the root Mana means the subtle mind and heart. On the other hand, the 'Rishis' used to preach and teach others about their astounding spiritual realisation and discoveries.

(ii) The *Chanda* is the classical style of poetic composition in which the Mantra is composed. For example, the most popular style is called 'Gayatri' in which there are three lines of eight letters or syllables, totaling twenty four letters or syllables in all. The 'Chanda' indicates the rhythmic style of composition adopted for the pronunciation or chanting of the Mantra. This component creates the

physical sound or the sonic energy which empowers the Mantra with substantial physical potent and substantial mystical effects.

(iii) The third component called the *Devata* or the chosen deity is the specific God-head that is aimed to be worshipped and realised with that Mantra. It is the deity to whom this particular Mantra is dedicated. Usually it is the supreme transcendental Brahm to whom the Mantra is devoted. But in case specific God or Goddess is being worshipped using a Mantra, then it would be obviously that particular God or Goddess who would be the Devta. For instance, Goddess Saraswati is the patron goddess being worshipped by using Mantras specifically dedicated to her as said in Saraswati Rahasya Upanidhad, verse no. 5 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. When the specific God is invoked by the use of a particular Mantra specially dedicated to him, it is like invoking all the divine energies and cosmic powers represented by that particular God-head. In other words, it is the bull's eye at which the energised arrow is being targeted. The God, in this context, can be defined as the specific cosmic field at which the frequency generated by the chanting (Japa) of a particular Mantra is directed even as specific broadcasting radio station use specific frequencies targeted to a particular area of the globe or a satellite in space. It is a very scientific concept. That is why if we wish to worship any particular God or divine aspect of creation, we have to use Mantras dedicated to this specific God or deity.

(iv) The *Beej*, literally the seed, is the syllable or letter which is the basic sound-form, the primary sound from which the Mantra has sprouted much like a tall tree having its origin in the humble 'seed'. The 'Beej' or seed of the Mantra indicates the root or origin of the Mantra. It is a group of those syllables that contain, in compact coded form, the essence or gist of the Mantra, and thereby it implies the existence of latent energy or power in that Mantra. During formal ritualistic forms of worship using worship instruments as well as during the process of 'Anga Nyas', which is the invocation of the chosen deity and assigning various designated parts of the body where this deity is to invest its supernatural powers for the benefit of the worshipper. The Beej Mantra is the root or seed formula around which a particular Mantra is built, and which gives the Mantra its basic and inherent power and mystical strength.

(v) The fifth component called the *Tatva*—essence indicates the inherent potential supernatural powers and astounding prowess of the Mantra, the purpose for which it should be used, and is like the meaning of a formula without which it can't be wisely used.

According to another interpretation, the Mantra has six components. They are Rishi, Chanda, Devta, Beej, Shakti and Kilak. While the first four components have already been described earlier, the last two, i.e. Shakti and Kilak are briefly described now:--

(a) The fifth component is the *Shakti* of the Mantra. It is the mystical, astounding, divine and holy cosmic dynamic powers that the particular Mantra possesses; the latent and powerful energy of the Mantra which makes it so effective and praiseworthy. The Shakti is the concealed latent but most magnificent and dynamic potentials of the Mantra which are reflective of the patron deity's supernatural authority and powers. The Shakti is the mystical dynamic cosmic powers of Nature that are encrypted in the Mantra's syllables and letters. In other words, the mysterious

power, authority and dynamism of the Mantra is called its 'Shakti'. Or, the Mantra is the worshipped deity manifested in the words or letters of the Mantra, complete with all its supernatural powers and authority. The word Shakti itself means 'energy', so the Shakti of the Mantra is the Mantra's dynamic energy that is subtly present in it in a coded form. Proper use of the Mantra helps to de-code this energy and unleash or activate it.

(b) The *Kilak* is the sixth component. It is like the peg that helps a Mantra to be established in the body of the worshipper of a particular deity of that Mantra, or to the mystical worship instrument used during occult practices to invoke the supernatural powers of the deity thorough this Mantra and invest this instrument with these divine and mystical supernatural powers. It is like a nail to fix the Mantra at the designated point in the body. The Kilak helps to anchor or provide a mooring that helps to fix the mystical effects of a Mantra and prevent it being dissipated or wasted. Usually, it is in the form of Beej Mantras, or the seed or root letters having mystical powers that are specific to the deity being worshipped by the given Mantra.

For example, the Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 4 says that the Kilak of the Saraswati's Mantra is the Pran, which means that this Mantra is hitched to the vital forces of life represented by Pran, the vital winds, and especially breath. The Mantra in effect empowers the Pran to become active and empowered, to possess and display all the glorious and stupendous powers and majesty of the worshipped deity through its various actions and deeds. For instance, when a man speaks wisely, truthfully and energetically, it is actually the Pran revealing these glorious virtues of Goddess Saraswati.

Another example is the Shuk Rahasya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, which describes the use of OM as a Mantra to do Anga Nyas in its verse no. 20. The Kilak for OM is 'So-a-ham' meaning 'that is me', where 'that' refers to the supreme Brahm. In this case, the spiritual aspirant's Atma is the 'me' or his true 'self'. Having a firm conviction and faith in this eclectic truth is like the nail which helps to fix his attention on the glory of the Mantra OM along with the awareness of his 'self' as being a manifestation of Brahm for whom this Mantra OM is being used.

(iii) Beej or seed or root Mantra and Maatrika of a Mantra

The concept of Beej Mantra and the Maatrika of a Mantra are closely related with each other and are the two aspects of the same coin. Whereas the term 'Beej Mantra' is used to indicate the root or seed from where the Mantra evolves and derives its mystical powers, the term Maatrika is generally used in the Tantra form of worship to indicate the divine Shaktis or Mother Goddesses that personify the Supreme Being who is being worshipped by the Mantra.

Each Mantra has two components—subtle and gross. The subtle part is its 'Beej Mantra' which is like the seed from where the huge tree grows. The gross part is the larger and extended part of the Mantra having a number of letters or words or phrases. The Beej Mantra consists of a consonant and the vowel sound attached to it with a dot on top to indicate its point-source of cosmic energy as well as to indicate its anointment as the chief component of the Mantra. The dot is called the Anuswar, and it produces the nasal sound in association with the vowel sign preceding it. For example, in the Mantra 'Hans' as described in the Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos.

62-63, the Beej Mantra is the Sanskrit consonant 'Ha' + the vowel sound of the letter 'A' with a dot on top—producing the sound equivalent of 'hunt + suns or sons' = 'hans'. Since this word 'Hans' refers to the cosmic transcendental supreme Brahm and its counterpart as the Atma or pure consciousness present in the body of an individual creature, the letter 'Ha' represents Brahm, while the letter 'Sa', which is a sibilant sound following the main Beej Mantra, means 'like that' or 'like it' referring to the Atma because the Atma is 'like that Brahm'.

The Beej Mantra is like the 'seed or root' from which the rest of the Mantra evolves and is said to derive its mystical and stupendous powers and potentials. This Beej Mantra is like the seed having the tree secretly present in it, and the Mantra would then be like the fully grown-up tree. Even when grown, the tree needs the root to anchor it and derive its nourishment from the ground. Hence the two epithets 'seed' and 'root' used to describe the Beej Mantra. Each deity has a specific Beej Mantra dedicated to it, and one Beej Mantra may apply to more than one deity.

The Beej Mantra is like someone's pet name or nick-name by which he is fondly known to and called by those who are very close to him as compared to his formal name and address with which he is known to and addressed by the rest of the world in his formal life. Hence, the use of the Beej Mantra establishes a close proximity between the worshipper and the deity worshipped, and it creates an environment of informality and direct access as compared to formal names.

The Maatrika of a Mantra are the various Sanskrit letters or alphabets that collectively form the text of the Mantra.

Since the Mantra represents the cosmic divinity known as the supreme transcendental Brahm in its numerous manifestations known as various Gods, the letters are called the Maatrikas because they empower this Mantra with the stupendous mystical powers that this Mantra possesses much like Brahm employing his cosmic dynamic energy to enable him to initiate and then sustain and develop this creation, and even bring about its conclusion.

The Maatrika Vidya is the esoteric and secret knowledge of creation that deals with the Shakti or the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being known as Brahm that first stirs the neutral and calm primordial cosmic gel by injecting in it the first spark of life, which in turn sets off a chain reaction that culminates in the form of the creation as it is known now. The word 'Maatrika' literally means a small mother. Since the process of creation is so complex that it required a number of complicated processes taking place simultaneously, with each individual element and each single dynamic source of energy playing its crucial role in the composite phenomenon of creation, these were called 'Maatrikas' because they were all like little mothers who had got together and used their combined energy, resources and abilities to create or conceive a cosmic embryo, nourish it, and allow it to develop to maturity so that the creation could be revealed in the way it finally did. They conceived and harboured this creation in their collective womb, and had nourished and sustained it till the time it was born in the matured form as we know it today.

The 'Maatrika Vidya' is the esoteric knowledge (science) which pertains to the individual letters or syllables of any given Mantra dedicated to any given deity who represents one or the other aspect or facet of the Supreme Being known as Brahm. The Maatrika Vidya deals with the mystical power, energy, authority and strength, i.e. the dynamism that is inherent in any given Mantra, but which is based on the individual units (i.e. the individual letters or syllables) of the Mantra. That is, if one knows what the individual units of a Mantra are, then he can correctly predict the

power and abilities that not only this Mantra possesses but also of the deity that this Mantra represents.

For instance, it is well established that the Mantra 'OM' stands for Brahm. Therefore, the Maatrika Vidya of OM would be a comprehensive understanding of its finer sound components and their alphabetical counterparts, along with their spiritual significance and metaphysical import, as well as the combined astounding spiritual powers, dynamism and energy that they incorporate in themselves when they form the Mantra known as 'OM'.

In modern science we know that any finished product requires a chain of steps to be meticulously undertaken before it is finally produced. The science of organic chemistry teaches us that numerous chemical products are created by tweaking the basic molecular structure of various elements in association with the ubiquitous carbon atom that is at the central core of all organic formulas.

Similarly, the creation of this universe was not an isolated event, but it required countless subtler steps undertaken in a systematic form that worked together towards one goal, and that goal was the revelation of this creation. Many small steps and countless numbers of subtle factors that were insignificant in themselves, but assumed great importance as part of the cosmic mosaic of creation, contributed to the creation of this world. Each of these factors and elements are the Maatrikas of this creation. This world is a 'creation' precisely for this reason—it was moulded from primary ingredients that had no significant value of their own, but when they were subjected to many adjustments and experimentations they produced a 'world' that is rich in dynamism and energy, a world that has no resemblance to any of these primary ingredients. Each step was equally important and equally significant, because one miss-step would have caused the entire process to malfunction and come to a standstill.

Each of these 'steps' are metaphorically cited as the various 'Maatrikas' in the field of metaphysical interpretation of this celestial phenomenon. Here, the word Maatrika is related to the Mantras which are divine formulas used in meditation and contemplation, and hence implies the hidden energy and dynamism of the letters of the Mantra which give it its inherent stupendous powers, potentials and authority as well as its holiness, divinity and sanctity.

The process of creation involved cosmic efforts by the creator who is said to have performed a cosmic fire sacrifice in order to initiate this process, and had obviously employed certain Mantras, as any fire sacrifice needs the use of Mantras for its proper sanctified process. As would be seen in due course, the Mantra employed by Brahma was Hans that is a synonym Mantra for Pranav or OM. The inherent dynamism and energy of this Mantra is contained in its syllables or letters, and it is this dynamism and energy that not only initiated the process of creation but also sustained it during its period of development and growth that culminated in the birth of the visible creation.

Brahm initiated this creation with the help of his cosmic dynamic powers and energy represented and encrypted in the Beej Mantra. But as it happened, the unfolded creation had numerous Gods and Goddesses. These Gods actually symbolise the various aspects of Brahm's cosmic powers and authority, and the Goddesses represent their empowerment and strength to give effect to their mandate. This is a classic case of delegation of authority.

Mere letters and words or phrases of the Mantra would be neutral if not given their powers, or if they are not 'empowered' and 'enabled' much like Brahm which was a neutral entity until it empowered and armed itself with the cosmic dynamic

energy, the necessary strength and authority to enable itself to initiate the process of creation. So, the Maatrika or Beej Mantras are the empowering aspect of the main body of the Mantra.

In Hinduism, meditation and contemplation upon a chosen deity is done by the help of a Mantra as a specific formula dedicated to invoke its powers as well as to concentrate the mind and its various faculties on the deity along with aiding the process of meditation and contemplation. This is done by doing Japa which involves repetition of the given Mantra. In fact, Japa is an integral part of any religious exercise, even for success in Yoga because it helps to harness the latent and dormant energy in the body by focusing the mind on the purpose at hand. The Beej Mantra is used for its concentrated energy and strength alongside its ease of use and usefulness in offering oblations or doing Anga Nyas (which is establishing the divine powers of the deity on the different parts of the body to purify them, empower them and strengthen them with dynamic energy and holiness associated with the Mantra).

In metaphysics, the supreme Brahm is the deity worshipped, and his Manta is OM which is a monosyllabic word. The Brahm Vidya Upanishad however describes the Mantra as 'Hans' because it refers to the pure consciousness called the Atma as a manifestation of Brahm in the body of the individual creature, and repetition of this Mantra is like establishing a union between the two of them and reminding the spiritual aspirant that his 'true self' is the Atma which is none other than the Supreme Being known as Brahm. That is why there are a number of Yoga Upanishads that extol the virtues of this Hans Mantra during the process of various meditation and contemplation exercises.

The single point source of everything in existence is indisputably Brahm represented by the Beej Mantra. If the letter of the Beej Mantra represents this Brahm, then the dot and the vowel sign of the Beej Mantra are like the dynamic powers, energy and authority of Brahm. The extended part of the Mantra would then be equivalent to the revelation of Brahm in the form of myriad Gods representing one or the other virtues and qualities of Brahm, and their divine counterparts called the various Goddesses would represent the powers and authority vested in these Gods by the supreme Authority so that they can carry out their assigned duties.

In Tantra form of occult worship, the Supreme Being is worshipped as a divine cosmic Shakti or cosmic Mother which is actually the cosmic powers and dynamic energy of the supreme Brahm that is responsible for the creation coming into being, its development, growth and sustenance, and is even responsible for its conclusion. If the Supreme Being is regarded as the cosmic Male, then the opposite force, the cosmic Female, is envisioned as the Shakti, or the dynamic energy and vital powers, potentials and authority of this Supreme Being. The cosmic Male provided the vital spark of life in the form of the cosmic Consciousness which is like the 'sperm', while the cosmic Shakti is the female counter-part, called the 'Prakriti' which received this 'sperm' and nourished it in its womb to produce the offspring in the form of this vast creation. It was in the Prakriti's womb that the creation was conceived, developed and grew to emerge as the mysterious creation which is as mystical and enigmatic as its father, the Supreme Being. Obviously, the cosmic sperm would have been wasted if it was not accepted by the comic Mother known as Prakriti.

In Tantra philosophy, the Supreme Being is known as Mahadeva or Shiva, and the female part or Shakti is known as Uma or Parvati. In the language of the Upanishads or Vedanta, the same Supreme Being is known as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm from which the entire

creation sprouted like the tree from a seed, and the cosmic Shakti is called Maya or Prakriti. The Maya is nothing but the Viraat Purush's dynamic powers that brought about the beginning of creation, sustains it and would finally conclude it; the Prakriti is the womb where the creation conceived and developed. The embryo is the Hiranyagarbha which is the subtle body of Brahm, and this embryo developed and revealed the Viraat Purush.

So, if the given Mantra is regarded as a personification of the given deity, then the Maatrika would be its energy and dynamism that is latent and inherent in it. The Mantra would lose its powers and potentials in the absence of the Maatrika just like the Supreme Being needed the power of the Shakti to create the world.

The word Maatrika literally means a 'little mother'. So, it is given the same reverence that one would give to a mother because it is the mother that gives shape to the body of the offspring—in this case the main body of the Mantra. Shorn of the Maatrika, the Mantra would be meaningless and powerless.

In Tantra form of worship, the term 'Maatrika' is used to indicate the following seven Goddesses—Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Vaaraahi, Indraani, and Chamunda.

The *Brahm Vidya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 63 asserts that *no Mantra has any value if there is no Maatrika in it*. To quote—"Nowhere is any Mantra (which is an esoteric and mystical group of letters or words or phrases used to worship or pay tributes to a deity) preached or nowhere does it have any meaning, value or even an existence if there is no Maatrika in it (63)."

This Upanishad has elaborately described the *Hans Mantra* in its various verses, e.g. verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79. In the present case, the Mantra is 'Hans' referring to Brahm in the form of the Atma or pure consciousness present inside the body of the spiritual aspirant.

Atharva Veda's *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 3-4 says that Maatrika Vidya is the esoteric knowledge that had been instrumental in the creation of this world. To quote—

"verse no. 3 = The Swayambhu (self-born) Brahma (the creator) replied—"The Maatrika Vidya is the one that has created the entire world. [It is the knowledge that deals with the intricacies and finer subtle details of the process of creation, details that are esoteric and mysterious. It would answer your question 'How was this creation created?']" (3).

"verse no. 4 = This Vidya known as Maatrika Vidya has two forms—one with two syllables or letters (i.e. the Mantra 'Hans'), and the other with three syllables or letters (i.e. the Mantra 'OM' or Pranav). In fact, both these two forms of the Maatrika Vidya are the same. It also has another eclectic but esoteric form or derivation or variation having four letters or syllables (4)."

The Beej Mantras are also called the "seed or root Mantras". The word 'Beej' refers to the fundamental, essential, elementary part of the Mantra. They are monosyllables which encrypt all the divine, spiritual, mystical and eclectic powers, potentials and authority possessed by the patron deity for which that particular Beej Mantra is meant. These Beej Mantras are used in formal ritualistic worship, as during fire sacrifices, in occult forms of worship when worship instruments consisting of geometrical lines and figures, called the Yantra, are employed much like we have the

circuit diagrams in an electronic instrument, as well as for doing Japa or constant repetition of a particular letter or word or phrase having divine and mystical qualities in order to invoke their powers and potentials for the benefit of the aspirant, and meditation and contemplation. These Beej Mantras are added as a prefix or suffix to the main Mantra to enhance and multiply its effects and potentials. For example, the root/seed/Beej Mantra 'Rang' stands for Lord Ram as well as the fire element. In other words, when it is used during a formal form of worship, it would boost the effect of the main Mantra of Lord Ram as well as subtly inject it with the stupendous and magnificent powers of 'fire'.

They are monosyllables and are much like the alphabets used in science and mathematical equations to denote other elements or factors. They encrypt great secret powers of creation in them, and must be pronounced and used properly even as the different alphabets standing for different atoms in organic chemistry must be properly placed at their designated places to make any sense out of them; otherwise the entire complex chemical compound represented by these monosyllable alphabets would be meaningless. Even in algebra, we use alphabets to denote certain things, and then go on calculating on the basis of these hypothetical assumptions to arrive at conclusive results. This system is used in all spheres of science. Therefore we conclude that the use of these 'Beej' Mantras during occult practices and ritualistic forms of worship to invoke divine powers and seek results is like the time tested scientific method applied in the sphere of metaphysics.

The Beejnighantu text (Beej = seed Mantra; Nighantu = dictionary) written by Bhairav lists 50 such Beej Mantras and describes what they stand for.

Another text known as Beej-vidhaan has 75 lines in the poetical style called the Anushtup Chanda describing the Beej Mantras like Hrim, Strim, Aim, Krim etc. representing different deities such as Aindri, Vaamekshana, Saraswati, Kali etc. respectively.

Similarly, the Ekakhar-kosha of Purshottamadeva lists the Beej Mantras of various Gods and Goddesses, such as 'A' for Vasudeo, 'Aa' for Pitaamaha (Brahma the creator of the visible world), 'Pa' for the Wind God called Pawan, 'Saa' for Laxmi the goddess of wealth as well as for Shiva the third God of the Trinity.

Another text called Mantraarthaa-bhidhan by Varadaatantra also lists the Beej Mantra such as 'Haum' for Shiva, 'Dum' for Goddess Durga, 'Krim' for Goddess Kalikaa, 'Hrim' for Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, 'Klim' for Kaamdeo-cupid, the patron god of love and passion, 'Gam' for Ganesh, 'Kshraum' for Narshingh, the half-lion and half-man incarnation of Vishnu, etc.

According to Maatrikaanighantu by Mahidas, the Beej Mantras and even the word Mantras of certain chief deities are as follows—'A' stands for Shrikantha (Shiva, the one with a blue-tinged throat), 'Keshava' for Krishna, 'Vaata' for the Wind God of Pawan, 'Ka' for Maya, 'Ma' stands both for Vaikuntha, the abode for Lord Vishnu who is the second of the Trinity Gods and is responsible for sustenance of creation, as well as for Mahaakaal, one of the names of Shiva, 'Ya' stands for Yamuna etc.

There are said to be eight Maatrikas or Beej Mantras pertaining to Goddess Tripura. These are the esoteric letters that symbolize the eight forms of Goddesses that the universal cosmic Mother has taken. They are the following—'Hrim' for Aindri and Bhuvaneshwari, 'Strim' for Vaamekshana, 'Aim' for Saraswati, 'Krim' for Kali, 'Saa' for Laxmi, 'Dum' for Goddess Durga, 'Krim' for Goddess Kalikaa, and 'Klim' for Kaam. These eight Maatrikas of Goddess Tripura are enshrined in the outer first Chakra (ring) of the worship instrument employed to offer mystical

worship to Goddess Tripura as described in *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 12.

Now let us examine some of the great Upanishads that describe the “Hansa Mantra”, as this Mantra is pertinent to the theme of our present Book on the concept of ‘Hansa’ as envisioned in the Upanishads.

The Mantra *Hans*—There are a number of Upanishads that describe the Hans Mantra—viz. (a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131, Canto 2, verse nos. 5, 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 52, 54-55. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hanso-panishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93.

The *Yogchudamani Upanishad*, verse no. 82-83 of Sam Veda tradition describes this Swan in the context of Yoga. Let us see what it has to say in this context—

“Verse 82—The ‘Hansa’ (literally a divine swan) resides gloriously and majestically in the center of the two eyes of a creature during the waking state of consciousness. The letter ‘Sa’ of the Hindi/Sanskrit alphabet represents the ‘Khechhari Mudra’ of the Yogi which is certainly the personification or the image of the word ‘Twam’ (82).

“Verse 83—The letter ‘Ha’ represents the supreme Lord of creation, called ‘Parmeshwar’ which is certainly symbolised or represented by the word ‘Tat’ . [That is, the two syllables of the word ‘Hansa’, meaning the divine swan, are ‘Han’ (Ha + ṁ) and ‘Sa’ [Hamsa] which stand for the two words of metaphysics which have profound impact—the 2nd word is ‘Twam’ and the 1st is ‘Tat’ corresponding to these two syllables respectively.]¹ Any person who concentrates his mind and attention, and contemplates and meditates upon the letter ‘Sa’ shall surely become akin to, or equivalent to the form or the image represented by the letter ‘Ha’. This is called contemplating upon and practicing of the twin tenets of ‘So-a-ham’ and ‘Tattwa-masi’ (83) [82-83].

[Note—¹The Upanishadic sage establishes uniformity and oneness with the two great philosophies and metaphysical concepts of the scriptures—‘So-a-ham’ which means ‘that is me’, and ‘Tattwa-masi’ which means ‘the essence is pure consciousness and it is me’. The word ‘that’ refers to Brahma which is the universal and absolute Truth and Reality about the existence, and has the qualities, inter alia, of enlightenment, of being eternal, omnipotent, universal, omnipresent, immanent, omniscient etc. When the seeker/aspirant focuses his attention on the self represented by the letter ‘Sa’ (self) and the ‘Khechhari Mudra’ (when he is unconscious of the external world and focuses his attention on the glorious supreme entity present in the center of his eyebrows), he realises the truth of the maxim ‘So-a-ham’. When he opens his eyes of wisdom, the truth of the 2nd tenet ‘Tattwa-masi’ dawns on him. Put simply, it

means that the creature realises that ‘he is the same as the supreme Brahma who resides in his Atma/soul present in his bosom/heart’. At the same time, ‘the external world seen through this eye of wisdom symbolised by the presence of the divine swan in his eyes is the same Brahma who has revealed himself in this multifarious, diverse and myriad world’. This is the essential truth, or ‘Tattwa’.]”

This eclectic Mantra ‘Hans’ has been described in *Brahm Vidya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 16, 23-24, 34, 61-64, 78-79. Let us see what it says.

“Verse no. 16 = The Jiva (i.e. the life-consciousness present inside the gross body of the living creature) involuntarily does a constant Japa of the two holy Mantras—i.e. ‘Sa’ and ‘Ha’¹. [Japa refers to the repetition of an esoteric group of letters which are called a holy Mantra. They are said to possess mystical and divine powers, and are used as a tool to focus attention and energy during meditation and contemplation. The concept of involuntary Japa has been described in verse nos. 78-79 below.]

The mystical effect of this involuntary Japa is that the Jiva (in the form of his subtle Atma or conscious life factor) moves upwards or looks upwards from the ‘Nabhi Randhra’ (literally the subtle aperture of the body represented by the navel where this life factor is supposed to live)².

This Jiva is not affected by any of the flaws and shortcomings that are inherent to this material world of sense objects³ (16).

[Note—¹When the creature breathes, the inhaled air produces a sound which is equivalent to the letter ‘Sa’ in the mouth, and the exhaled air produces the sound equivalent of the letter ‘Ha’ in the throat. The combined effect is the creature is involuntarily repeating the great Mantra ‘So-a-ham’, meaning ‘that essential and absolute Truth of creation that is known as Brahm is none but I’, or ‘the supreme Truth is my true self and it is me’. Here ‘me’ or ‘I’ refers to the soul. In other words, the creature is involuntarily, at the subtle and atomic level of his existence, recognizing and accepting the spiritual fact that he is not an ordinary component of the world but the supreme Brahm personified in his form. This is called the exalted state of self-realisation and enlightenment.

Since breathing is an automatic and involuntarily exercise done regularly and without any effort whatsoever, when the wise and enlightened aspirant understands that each breath is tantamount to repeating the eclectic Mantra ‘Hans’, he is deemed to be doing an involuntarily and unbroken Japa day in and day out. Refer Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 62-65.

The present Brahm Vidya Upanishad itself has many verses dedicated to this eclectic Mantra—e.g. verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79.

²The Nabhi Randhra is the virtual center of the body as the site of the navel. This is because—(a) It is through this cite that the embryo draws its nourishment when it lay in the mother’s womb, which is like saying that the lifeless clump of flesh was infused the spark of life and vitality through this hole. (b) It is here that all the Naadis or nerves in the body are said to have their center in the Nabhi Kanda, and it is from here that they radiate out to various parts of the body. (c) The navel is believed to be the center of the Nabhi Chakra, the subtle energy center which is the focus of the sun’s energy which is concentrated here. It is in this center where the sun is shining in a symbolic way in the body of the creature like it does in the sky. The point of

the sky where the celestial sun is located is regarded as the navel of the Viraat Purush, the invisible, macrocosmic and all-incorporating gross body of the supreme Brahm. The navel of the individual creature occupies the same importance because the latter is regarded as an image of the Viraat Purush. The subtle form of the sun located here energises the body much like the celestial sun energises the world from its center located in the sky.

Since the creature draws its energy, vitality, strength and nourishment from the mother's blood through the placenta attached to the navel, the latter is like the aperture of the mouth through which one draws or sucks in liquids through the bore of a straw dipped in the latter. That is why this navel is called a 'Randhra' which literally means a slit or opening present in the body. This is the picture at the micro level of creation in relation with the individual creature. When it is extended to the macro level, then the cosmic embryo would be the Hiranyagarbha and the subtle aperture from where it draws its nourishment and dynamic creative energy from Brahm to reveal itself in the macrocosmic gross body known as the Viraat Purush would be represented by the celestial Sun. That is why the Sun is regarded as the cosmic center of creativity, energy, vitality and life; it is the cosmic swirling center of dynamic energy. It is like the 'navel' of the Viraat Purush much like the navel that is present in the body of the individual creature because the latter is the microcosmic visible manifestation of the former.]

“Verse no. 23-24 = Those wise ones who symbolically pour a stream of this elixir on the divine deity called Mahadeva (literally the ‘great God’ or Lord Shiva), located in the region of the navel and whose form is like a lighted lamp, while doing Japa with the Mantra ‘Hans-Hans’¹ are blessed with being free from various diseases such as the degenerating effects of old age culminating into death. [That is, such a man acquires robust health and maintains it even in his old age; he dies peacefully without having to undergo the usual torments associated with old age and death.]

He is also becomes eligible to acquire the various mystical powers called Siddhis² such as Anima etc. [That is, he acquires special powers by preserving his vital energy, stamina and vitality.] (23-24).

[Note—¹The word Hans has two components—Ha + Sa. It comes by reversing the great saying ‘So-a-Ham’ meaning ‘that essence or truth is me’. So when the self-realised man repeats this Mantra, he is in effect asserting that he has realised who he actually is. He affirms that he is not an ordinary man with the body, but that divine Being known as the Brahm who resides in his heart as the pure consciousness or Atma. The bird swan is chosen to represent him because this bird is deemed to be very pure and selective in what it accepts and what it rejects. It is known to select pearls from an assortment of gems, and drink milk and leave its water content. Similarly, the wise man is expected to pick the truth from amongst the basket of assorted charms present in this creation and leave aside the non-truths. The concept of Hans have been described elsewhere in this Upanishad also, such as verse nos. 16, 20-22, 25-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79.

²The Siddhis—The word Siddhi refers to various mystical and occult powers that a spiritual aspirant acquires as a result of certain ritualistic practices.

There are eight Siddhis which are divine mystical powers which enables the person to accomplishment astounding feats. They are the following— (i) ‘Anima’ means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; (ii) ‘Mahima’ is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one’s achievements, knowledge and skills; (iii) ‘Garima’ is to have weight, stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance, (iv) ‘Laghima’ is to have simplicity and humility; (v) ‘Praapti’ is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired; (vi) ‘Prakramya’ is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) ‘Ishwatwa’ is to be able to have lordship or sway over others; and (viii) ‘Vashitwa’ is to be able to control and subdue others.

The Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 151-155 classifies all Siddhis into two categories—Kalpit and A-Kalpit. The Kalpit Siddhis are the ones which are created with efforts made for them using various means and methods. They have a limited scope, are perishable, and have imaginable powers and potentials that can be predicted. On the other hand, the A-Kalpit Siddhis are those which are self-generated or uncreated by any artificial means, are natural and with unimaginable mystical potentials and powers that cannot be predicted.

Refer also to Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 46-55 and Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 56-102.]

“Verse no. 34 = A wise and enlightened man who remains engrossed in repeating the eclectic and divine Mantra ‘Hans-Hans’ (i.e. ‘So-a-Ham’ meaning ‘that essence or Truth or Brahm is me’) is indeed an auspicious personification of the Trinity Gods, i.e. of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder. He can be successful, by the grace and blessing of his enlightened Guru, in becoming aware or realising the ubiquitous supreme Brahm who all-pervading, all-encompassing and all-incorporating (34).

“Verse no. 61 = This word ‘Hans’ is the great saying of the Vedas; it is the maxim and axiom proclaimed by the Vedas; it is the assertion of the Vedas.

This Hans is Rudra (Lord Shiva) personified, and it is the Supreme Being himself (61).

[Note—The word Hans refers to the eclectic Mantra ‘So-a-Ham, meaning ‘I am that essence’, or more elaborately ‘I, in my truthful form as the pure consciousness known as the Atma, am that essence known as Brahm’, or ‘I and Brahm are one’. Here the word ‘I’ refers to the Atma or pure consciousness. The Vedas endeavour to enlighten a person about his true ‘self’ and remove ignorance from his mental horizon. They preach the Truth of existence, about who the aspirant actually is, what is the true goal of life, how to reach it, how to get rid of miseries and problems of life and find permanent deliverance from them, how to obtain happiness and bliss that is permanent and best etc. When the spiritual aspirant discovers to his astonishment that the exalted stature that is obtainable by doing elaborate fire sacrifices and other religious rituals is easily obtainable by him by turning inwards, by meditation and contemplation that lead to him discovering his own divinity and holiness in the form of the Atma, he exults in joy and spontaneous ecstasy. He would

literally dance in joy at having discovered a pitcher of eternal happiness and peace hidden inside his own bosom rather than somewhere outside.]

“Verse no. 62-63 = Amongst all the Gods, the Hans is the most exalted God called Maheshwar. Right from any point on the earth to the far reaches of the infinite directions, right from the first letter of the Sanskrit language, i.e. the letter ‘A’ (implying the beginning of creation) and extending to the last letter ‘Ksha’ (indicating conclusion of the creation, because the word ‘Ksha’ stands for decay and ruin)—it is the same Hans representing the pure consciousness, the ultimate Truth and the supreme Brahm that pervades throughout the creation represented symbolically by the alphabets of the language.

Nowhere is any Mantra (which is an esoteric and mystical group of letters or words or phrases used to worship or pay tributes to a deity) preached or nowhere does it have any meaning or even an existence if there is no Maatrika in it (62-63).

“Verse no. 64 = The magnificent splendour and the stupendous glory of this divine Hans (i.e. the pure conscious Atma or the supreme Brahm) are central to all the eclectic virtues and glories that all the honourable Gods in creation possess. This Hans occupies an exalted stature amidst the Gods and is the focal point around which all the Gods of this creation exist¹.

The aspirant should meditate in the Gyan Mudra while remembering Lord Shiva in his ‘Dakshin Mukhi’ form² (64).

[Note—¹That is, this divine, self-illuminated and glorious entity is seated like an Emperor surrounded by all the Gods as his attendants. This is a figure of speech to emphasise the following points—(a) All the Gods derive their powers and strengths on the authority of the supreme Brahm who is central to their existence. (b) Brahm is at the center of the entire creation much like the hub of a wheel, and all the different Gods and Goddesses represent the different attributes, virtues and qualities of Brahm. They have spread out like the branches of a tree, and if the tree is not there these branches would also not be there. (c) These Gods owe their existence, powers, strength, authority and virtues as well as their importance, value and significance to one single point source called Brahm. They revolve around this central axis just like the planets do around the sun. (d) If Brahm is the seed, the Gods are the huge colourful tree with multifarious shape and size. This is the picture at the macrocosmic level. At the micro level of creation, the creature is a representative of the cosmos, while his Atma which is pure consciousness and his ‘true self’ is the central point of his existence because without the Atma his existence is not feasible. The various Gods represent the different functions of the body and they therefore reside in the respective organ carrying out those functions. That is why the Hans—the aphorism for this Atma—is central to the Gods because without the Atma the body and its Gods would be meaningless.

²The Gyan Mudra in relation with the word Dakshin Mukhi refers to the sitting posture adopted by Lord Shiva while he meditated facing south. It also might mean ‘with a bowed head’ because the word Dakshin in Sanskrit means downward facing. In ritualistic forms of worship, this direction is the location of Yam God, the god of death whose controller is Shiva. The word Yam also means self control and self restraint. Hence, meditating with total self control

and restraint over the restless organs of the body is called Gyan Mudra with a Dakshin Mukhi dimension.

An entire Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is dedicated to this south-facing form of Shiva, and it is called ‘Dakshin Murti Upanishad’.]

“Verse no. 78-79 = All spiritual aspirants who have a gross body (and of course are wise and enlightened) should constantly contemplate upon and visualise the ubiquitous presence of the supreme Lord who is faultless and immaculate, who is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent in this creation. While doing this, he should constantly repeat the divine eclectic Mantra ‘Hans-Hansa’. [In other words, the aspirant should constantly remind himself that he is no one else but the supreme Brahm himself personified. This is because another form of the Mantra is ‘So-a-Ham’, meaning ‘that is me’. Refer verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64.]

This type of Japa (repetition of the Mantra) done constantly and involuntarily is called ‘A-Japa Japa’, i.e. repetition of the Mantra in an involuntarily way and without being consciously aware of it being done at all¹.

This type of Japa involves a coordination of the Pran and Apaana winds. [This is because inhalation of breath during the Purak phase is known as the Pran, while the exhalation done during the Rechak phase is called Apaana.] Since a man breathes roughly twenty one thousands time during the course of a day, this is the number of times this Mantra ‘So-a-Ham’ is automatically repeated (78-79).

[Note—¹It is called ‘A-Japa Japa’ because this repetition is done involuntarily and without any special effort or attention paid to its repetition. The practitioner is not even aware that he is repeating any Mantra because it is directly linked to the normal breathing process which is an involuntary and an automatic biological process done constantly and without break, even while a person sleeps or goes about his daily chores of life—refer verse no. 16 and its note. The prefix ‘A’ indicates negation, and therefore this repetition of the Mantra Hansa is not regarded as doing a Japa in the conventional sense when special attention is focused on repeating any Mantra during some religious ritual or practicing Yoga. It is automatic and involuntary. So when the spiritual aspirant has risen to a level of awareness and enlightenment when he becomes aware of the spiritual importance of each breath that comes in and goes out of his body as representing the two limbs of the Mantra for Brahm, i.e. the letters ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ or the combined word ‘Hansa’, he is deemed to have become Brahm-realised. Only then can he say that he is repeating the Mantra ‘So-a-Ham’ meaning ‘that Brahm is me as my true self known as the pure consciousness or Atma’.]”

The *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 6, verse nos. 53-54 describes how one involuntarily repeats this Hans Mantra while he breathes. To quote these two verses—

“Canto 6, verse no. 53 = These two winds, i.e. the Pran and Apaana act to pull each other in the opposite direction. That is, the Pran pulls the Apaana in the upper direction, and the Apaana pulls the Pran in the lower direction.

This is metaphorically depicted by the two letters of the Mantra ‘Hansa’, viz. ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’. In other words, the Jiva (consciousness) tries to go up and escape from

the body while making the sound of the letter ‘Ha’, and then is pulled down back inside the body while making the sound ‘Sa’. (53).

“Canto 6, verse no. 54 = In this way, the Jiva (i.e. all living beings who breathe, for example a man) repeats this Mantra ‘Hans-Hansa’ involuntarily while alive. But few understand its metaphysical and spiritual import. On the other hand, those ascetics who are able to grasp the great importance and significance of this eternal and imperishable divine Mantra are indeed wise, erudite, self-realised and enlightened ascetics. [Their entire life is spent in doing involuntary Japa, which is repeating of a divine Mantra and reaping its spiritual benefits, even without making any special efforts do repeat it and obtain its natural spiritual reward. Refer also to Canto 1, verse nos. 131-133; Canto 2, verse nos. 8-11; and Canto 6, verse no. 20 of the Yogshikha Upanishad.] (54).”

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 5, verse nos. 52, 54-55 describe the Hans Mantra besides asserting that the Atma is Hansa personified—i.e. the Atma is pure, uncorrupt, wise and erudite like the divine Swan. Now let us examine what it says on the subject—

“Verse no. 52 = The practitioner also hears the subtle sound of breath coming in and going out of the nostrils, the sound that resembles the nasal sounds made by silently hissing the two letters ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ of the Sanskrit alphabet. The combined effect of continuously hearing these two sounds in a cyclic manner as the practitioner exhales and inhales breath is the formation of the word ‘Hans’ which means ‘a divine Swan’. [In other words, by continuously practicing Yoga, a stage is reached when the spiritual aspirant realises that he has obtained an exalted spiritual stature and has been successful in his endeavour of doing Yoga. This achievement is indicated by the fact that his sub-conscious mind hums and constantly reminds him that he is as pure and holy as the Swan—the ‘Hans’. This word is also used as a Mantra. Refer Hansopanishad, verse no. 5-15, Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 59-63, and Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 31-35, 82-83, 93.]

From this arises the Mana (i.e. the desire and inclination of the mind to enjoy the bliss and ecstasy that comes with experiencing the pure conscious ‘self’ or Atma, in all its glory and magnificence, during meditation) (52).

“Verse no. 54 = The Naadis have their base or foundation in the Kanda or Pinda (literally a ‘ball or egg like structure’). [Refer verse nos. 20-22.]

These Naadis are the base for the various Prans or vital winds that sustain and protect the body. [This is because if these Naadis do not carry consciousness or life-impulses to all corners of the body, the latter would die. The Pran is a word used to indicate ‘life’ and not death. Therefore, as long as a creature is alive, it is deemed that the Naadis have Pran flowing and pulsating in them. Refer also to verse no. 28 and 31.]

These Prans are the basis of life in all Jivas or living beings. [Pran is a synonym for the wind or air element that helps sustain life on earth. No living being would survive if there was no air on earth.]

And the Jiva is the abode for the Hans, i.e. the pure consciousness known as the immaculate and wise Atma that resides in the body of the living being called the Jiva. [The Atma is the true self of the creature, and the body is merely its habitat.] (54).

“Verse no. 55 = This Hans (the Atma; the pure consciousness) is the divine and sublime entity which provides the ‘Shakti’, the dynamic force, the basic energy, the vitality, the strength and the vigour that sustains and protects the entire edifice of this creation consisting of both the animate and the inanimate world. [Here the animate world refers to the creatures that have mobility, i.e. members of the entire zoological kingdom, and inanimate world is the immobile forms of life such as trees and other members of the plant kingdom.]

An ascetic should have no doubts and be free from all confusions and consternations in this regard. [This way he would be able to concentrate upon meditation and contemplation.] He should be cheerful, and practice Pranayam (breath control exercises) carefully and diligently (55).”

(iv) Who is eligible to receive a Mantra?

The question who should be given a Mantra and what its importance is has been answered in *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 2-4. Now, let us see what these verses have to say on the subject.

“Canto 2, verse no. 2 = Shiva replied to Brahma, ‘Oh Brahma, listen. What I shall tell you now is a secret and esoteric knowledge. Success in it is a long-haul process and can only be achieved by a disciple who has served his Guru (teacher) selflessly and diligently for a period of twelve years (2).

“Canto 2, verse no. 3 = This knowledge should be imparted in its entirety and in a comprehensive manner to a disciple who possesses certain auspicious and noble virtues, such as being magnanimous and generous, a disciple who is disciplined and ready to observe self-restraint, and who strictly follows the tenets of Brahmacharya in full (i.e. who observes the strict laws of celibacy and self-control of the sense organs). [These qualities should be in addition to the one mentioned in verse no. 2—i.e. to do service to one’s Guru for twelve years to indicate his earnest intentions and sincerity of purpose.]

This eclectic and esoteric knowledge cannot be taught to and accessed by one who is proud, greedy for material gains, or is lazy and indolent in any way (3).

“Canto 2, verse no. 4 = A disciple who is wise and erudite enough to understand the essence and the hidden meaning of the divine Mantra given to him by his moral preceptor at the time of his initiation into the religious fold by the latter and has thereby become enlightened and realised, it is only such a disciple who is deemed to be competent enough to actually benefit from any knowledge and wisdom sought to be acquired by study of the scriptures or by any other means. It is only he who attains success in any spiritual and religious exercise (4).

[Note—It is not enough to become a disciple of a Guru and accept a Mantra from him as a panacea for all spiritual ills. Simple repetition and mechanical process are useless unless their deep metaphysical meaning is understood and

the process is done with great faith and devotion as to its efficacy and potent in providing spiritual solace, succour, emancipation and salvation. A Mantra is like a formula of mathematics, and a student who understands intelligently how it is applied can solve all the complex problems that need the application of that particular formula, while a student who has learnt it by rote just with the aim of clearing his exams would fail to do so in practical life. A disciple who grasps the intricacies of a spiritual Mantra is deemed to be enlightened himself and competent to enlighten others about it, and since he is enlightened he cannot be haughty and boastful of his achievements or misuse the various mystical powers that come to him as a result of success in Yoga. He would be humble and pious in an exemplary manner.

Another thing is that if anything is done intelligently, with correct knowledge of how to go about it and done with full understanding of the results, one would be careful to avoid pitfalls and get deflected and perplexed by numerous alternatives and charms proffered by vested interests to divert his attention from his main goal; he would remain steady and unwavering in his pursuit. His efforts bear quicker and better results with less time and energy involved. The Mantras are mystical formulae to harness the cosmic divine energy in creation according to the individual spiritual needs of a particular person much like medicines taken by a patient to overcome his specific and individual ailments. The doctor prescribes a medicine to his patient on an individual basis much like a Guru who identifies the spiritual problems of the disciple and then prescribes a particular Mantra best suited for his individual spiritual needs. So if the patient is intelligent and wise, he would observe all the restrictions imposed by the doctor and take his medicine properly besides fine tuning his lifestyle which might have been contributing to his ailments. In other words, an intelligent disciple treats the Mantra as a holistic remedy for all his spiritual ailments and a device that can help him to obtain liberation and deliverance from this cycle of birth and death. He realises and has firm faith both on the Guru as well as on the Mantra much like a patient who is expected to have firm faith in his doctor and the medicine prescribed by him. If the disciple does not understand or know the full meaning of the Mantra and what he is supposed to be doing, he would not reap the full benefit like a student who gets a first division in college by learning the text book by heart but not understanding the subject comprehensively and intelligently, complete with its practical applications. The result would be disastrous for his career after he leaves college—what good for example a degree in engineering is if a person does not know how to tackle a mechanical emergency in a factory where he is employed on the basis of his first division marks-sheet! At the most the Mantra would give him some initial benefit and some degree of respect amongst his peers, or it might even provide him with certain mystical powers that come bundled with this Mantra, but that would be limited to worldly gains such as acclaim, a famous name, a large crowd of disciples, pomp and pageantry as an accomplished ascetic and other material benefits that comes with acquisition of mystical powers, but without benefiting his spiritual aim which after all is the main purpose of accepting a Mantra from a Guru.]”

(v) Anga Nyas and Kar Nyas with Mantras

There are two aspects of invoking any given Mantra and sanctifying the worshipper's body with them. They are known as (i) Anga Nyas and (ii) Kar Nyas. They are done with any Mantra using its seed or root called the 'Beej' of that Mantra, and are the two basic rituals of invoking the divine powers of the Mantras which are basically mystical formulas employed in religious practice, specially during occult rites and meditation of which this Khechari is a part. The word 'Kar' means hand, and 'Anga' means body, while 'Nyas' refers to an invocation, or vesting or assigning any entity with something, or entrusting an entity with some trust and responsibility; to deposit, repose, trust, pledge, entrust, keep, place, etc. This is a ritualistic process in which certain parts of the body are touched and certain Mantras are said. It also means the purification of the individual parts of the body and the installation of the individual letter of the invoked Mantra, complete with its full potentials, at those points. Therefore, Anga Nyas is a process of pledging utmost faith and conviction on the divine and holy Mantra's supernatural powers and potentials by invoking it and reposting it on the various locations of the body and its vital parts, such as the limbs, the abdomen and chest, the throat and forehead etc.

In other words, the process of doing Anga Nyas is to symbolically establish the Mantra's divine mystical powers in the worshipper's own body and make it sinless, holy, auspicious, sanctified and empowered. The deity being worshipped is symbolically requested to come and take its seat in the body, thereby ensuring that the worshipper is not only getting constant protection from this godhead but also has been dutifully purified and made auspicious. The body is now the symbolic seat of Divinity represented by the deity, and from the metaphysical perspective it has been now officially made the abode of Brahm as all the Gods are nothing but manifestations of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Authority of creation. With the deity firmly established in the body of the worshipper, the latter is deemed to personify all the glorious, majestic, divine and magnificent virtues exemplified by the worshipped deity.

Anga Nyas is therefore the process of ritualistic worship by which certain fixed points in the body are designated where the chosen deity is mentally invoked through the specific Mantra. This envisions that the mystical divine powers of the patron God or deity being worshipped by the Mantra are mentally invested in these fixed cardinal points of the body, thereby empowering the aspirant with their stupendous potentials as well as symbolically assigning the body to the tutelary God or deity to whom the particular Mantra belongs for his protection and blessing.

In the context of the Beej Mantras, it refers to invoking their divine cosmic dynamic powers and establishing them on various parts of the body, or assigning the patron Gods of these seed Mantras some specific part of the body so that they can establish themselves there.

Hence, doing Kar Nyas with the Beej Mantras would be to establish these symbolic Gods representing the cosmic, divine and mystical powers that are encrypted in the different Beej Mantras on the hand of the practitioner, while Anga Nyas would be to do the same on other parts of the body such as the chest, abdomen, shoulders, throat, forehead etc.]

The locations on the body where 'Anga Nyas' is done has great metaphysical significance. Usually these six cardinal points are the following—the two legs, two hands, one head and one waist region. But according to the *Shuk Rahasya Upanishad*, verse no. 20 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, they are the thumb, the tip of the fingers, the heart, the shoulders, the tuft on the top of the head, and the palm of the

hand. There are prescribed ways of invoking the Mantras, and when done in a proper way it empowers the ordinary body of the worshipper with extraordinary divine and mystical powers.

The *Garud Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 3, describes the process of 'Kar Nyas'. In this process, the various Mantras of Lord Garud are invoked while touching the different fingers with the thumb. For instance, touching the first finger with the thumb while saying the first and the second Mantra; touching the middle finger with the thumb while saying the third Mantra, touching the third finger with the thumb while saying the fourth third Mantra, and touching the little finger with the thumb while saying the fifth Mantra. Finally, the back of the two palms are touched while saying the sixth Mantra. Each time these Mantras are said, the six cardinal points of the body, such as the heart etc., should be touched by the thumb and the relevant finger. This is known as Anga Nyas. [The points are the heart, the forehead, the cranium, the eyes, the shoulders and the navel.]

According to *Ram Rahasya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, verse no. 43, these ten locations are the following—Brahm-randhra (which is the hair-like slit on the top of the skull), the forehead, the central point of the eyebrows (where the symbolic third eye of wisdom is said to be located), the upper palate, the two earlobes, the heart, the navel and the two thighs = 10 sites.

Primarily there are six sites according to the same Ram Rahasya Upanishad's verse no. 23 where the primary seed or root words, called the Beej Mantras, are invoked. They are the following—the Brahm-randhra (top of the skull), the central point of the eyebrows, the heart, the navel, and the two thighs = 6 sites.

According to its verse no. 83-85, there are five sites for doing Anga Nyas for a warrior. These are heart (left chest), forehead/central point of the eyebrows, the top of the head where the tuft of hair is located and which is the site of the Brahm-randhra, the body armour or shield, and the arms and armaments of the aspirant warrior. This is also followed in the worship of Shakti, the divine dynamic powers of creation, such as Durga, Parvati and Saraswati (the goddess of speech, knowledge and wisdom). Refer also *Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad*, verse no. 4 of Krishna Yajur Veda.

However, the *Dattatreya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Section 1, Canto 1, stanza no. 8 says that the Mantra of Lord Dattatreya (a form of Vishnu) are used for doing Anga Nyas on the following parts of the body—viz. the heart, the head (forehead), the cranium (top of the head), the upper part of the body including the two shoulders and the arms, and the eyes.

The human body is a microcosm of the cosmos, because according to the genesis of creation, the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, all-encompassing and all-inclusive manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm, had metamorphosed in the shape of the human body, and therefore this body is a manifestation of the entire creation including all its Gods and all their astounding potentials.

The creation has been visualised as having three divisions which form the so-called three worlds—viz. the heavens represented by the head of the human body where the Brahm-randhra, forehead and the eyebrows are located; the terrestrial world or the earth symbolised by the heart and the navel; and the nether or lower world by the legs and the two thighs. It must be noted that the two earlobes stand for the two extreme directions of the cosmic globe. So, when the aspirant does Anga Nyas with any Mantra on these specific points, he symbolically purifies these points on his body and empowers them with the mystical and ethereal powers of the powerful forces of Nature which these Mantras embody as mystical formulas encrypting astounding

dynamic energy and forces of creation. This is a perception which implies that the ethereal and mystical powers and potentials of the Mantras representing the stupendous forces of Nature that control creation, right from its conception to its development, growth, expansion, sustenance and conclusion, are invoked and established throughout the breadth and length of this visible creation manifested in the form of the body of the aspirant. In other words, the aspirant hopes that he would be empowered with all the glorious virtues and auspicious powers and stupendous potentials and majestic authority vested in the Viraat Purush at the cosmic level.

But at the same time this visualization of the body being a manifestation of the Viraat Purush carries a load of noble responsibility with it. If the worshipper is enlightened and wise enough so as to be doing the Anga Nyas with full understanding of its metaphysical and spiritual import, then he must also realise that he is not an ordinary mortal creature who indulges in the pursuit of worldly pleasures and comforts, or who thinks that success in this material world is the ultimate goal and criterion of success in life. On the other hand, he should endeavour to live a life of exemplary sacrifice and service, devoting his time on researching the ultimate Truth of his own self as well as the rest of creation; he must endeavour to fine out the way to free himself from the endless cycle of birth and death, and ensure that he gets final emancipation and salvation in this very life itself. He must aim and find the source that would give him eternal peace and happiness as well as contentedness and bliss of fulfillment. Otherwise he would be wasting his precious time and energy in worthless and meaningless perfunctory rituals.]

The *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 7, 9, 11-12, 14 describe the five forms of Shiva and how the five Beej Mantras dedicated to the different divine qualities that Shiva personifies are employed in doing Anga Nyas.

The *Surya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 1, says that the six basic vowel sounds of the Sanskrit language are used to do Shadanga Nyas when the worshipper prays to the Sun God by invoking the Mantras narrated in this particular Upanishad.

The *Shuk Rahasya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 20 describes how the divine Mantra OM is used for the purpose of doing Anga Nyas. It has been quoted and explained in detail under the title 'Beej Mantras', sub-title (c) 'the Mantra OM' of this appendix.

The *Ram Rahasya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2 describes how Anga Nyas is done with the different Mantras of Lord Ram in its various verses--e.g. verse no. 10-11, 22-23, 29, 39, 42-43, 49-51, 53, 55, 57, 61.

(vi) Doing Nyas of a Yantra (a worship instrument)

In ritualistic forms of worship such as in mystical occult practices, an instrument called a Yantra is used to offer worship to a chosen deity. The various Mantras of the deity that is to be worshipped with this instrument are invoked and established at different points on this instrument. This is called doing Nyas. This is done to symbolically establish the Mantra's divine mystical powers in a particular point of the worship instrument. It makes that point or spot holy, auspicious, sanctified and empowered. Doing Nyas helps to purify this instrument and make it blessed. The word 'Nyas' refers to an invocation, or vesting or assigning any entity with

something, or entrusting an entity with some trust and responsibility; to deposit, repose, trust, pledge, entrust, keep, place, etc. This is a ritualistic process in which certain parts of the worship altar or instrument or even the body of the worshipper are touched and certain Mantras are said. Therefore, doing Nyas is a process of pledging utmost faith and conviction on the divine and holy Mantra's supernatural powers and potentials by invoking it and reposting it on the various locations of the worship instrument and its vital parts, such as its central point, its spokes and rings. It makes the worship instrument powerful and effective as it now becomes energized with the dynamic powers of the deity to which this worship instrument is dedicated.

(vii) The Melan Mantra

The word Melan literally means establishing a union between two entities. In the context of Yoga and metaphysics, it refers to the establishment of a union between the Pran Shakti (the mystical powers of the vital life infusing wind forces inside the body) and the Shiva Shakti (the divine and supernatural powers of the consciousness called the Atma residing inside the bosom of the aspirant). This is brought about by the method of using the Mantras meant to be repeated during the Khechari Mudra done by ascetics as a part of Hath Yoga. It helps to bring about this union by focusing of the mind. This Mantra is given in detail in Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 17-20 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. The Mantra has seven Beej letters as follows—"Hrim Bhum Sum Mum Pum Sum Kshum".

(viii) The Tarak Mantra

The word 'Tarak' means 'that which gives liberation and deliverance'; and 'Mantra' of course means 'a spiritual formula that enables the aspirant to achieve success in his desired spiritual goal'. Hence, the Tarak Mantra is that Mantra which empowers the spiritual aspirant to find liberation and deliverance from this mudanne world of birth and death along with its associated horrors.

The Tarak Mantra is therefore a group of esoteric, ethereal and holy syllables, words or phrases having mystical powers and divine potentials that can achieve miraculous results for the adherent as they have the authority to bestow special spiritual abilities on the creature and help in his liberation and deliverance, his emancipation and salvation. The word 'Tarak' means an entity that takes one across some formidable obstacle that seems otherwise insurmountable and unconquerable. It is a medium by which all hurdles and impediments in one's path that prevent one from attaining his spiritual goal are overcome easily. It is therefore an instrument that provides spiritual liberation and deliverance to the seeker, one that gives emancipation and salvation to the creature's soul, a vehicle that can take a creature across the ocean of endless miseries and pains from which he is suffering in this world and from which he sincerely wishes to find freedom.

The word Tarak means to cause or enable to pass or cross over, to carry over, one that rescues, provides relief and succour, one that can provide liberation and deliverance to the creature from any bondage. Further, the word Tarak also refers to

the ‘eye of wisdom that liberates one from the darkness of ignorance and delusions’, and it has relevance here because meditation leads to the opening of the inner ‘eye’ of insight that leads to self realisation and enlightenment. ‘Tarak’ also means a meter of 4 x 13 syllables; hence it refers also to the various Mantras used for the purpose of meditation.

The Tarak Mantra is that which provides final deliverance to the soul of the spiritual seeker or aspirant. It is said in the Upanishads that the Mantras pertaining to Lord Ram are called the Tarak Mantra because it is on the strength of this Mantra that a dying man gets permanent liberation and deliverance from the shackle of this body as well as the world and its cycle of birth and death. Lord Ram is none other than the supreme transcendental Brahm himself personified. This fact is reiterated in Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4/4.

Hence, the Mantra of Lord Ram is also known as the Tarak Mantra—refer: Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 1; Canto 4, verse no. 7; and Canto 6, verse nos. 1-29.

The Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘Raam Raamaaya Namaha’—refer: (i) Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 22; (ii) Ram Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 16.

This holy Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram is regarded as being equivalent to the Tarak Mantra of Brahm, viz. ‘OM’—refer: Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 2.

There are various Upanishads dealing with this aspect of meditation and spiritual deliverance—such as Advai Tarak Upanishad and Tarak/Tarsar Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. These Upanishads describe ‘Tarak Brahm’ in all its finer connotations.

Some of the important Upanishads that are dedicated to this concept of Tarak are the following—Tarak/Tarsar Upanishad; Advaitarak, verse nos. 3, 7-11; Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-12; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1-2 (full); Canto 4, verse nos. 7-8; Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1-47; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-29; Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Cantos 2-3 and 5 (full); the Atharva-shikha, 2/1; Atharvashir, Kandika (Canto) 4; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 15-16; Naradparivrajak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 8 which is fully devoted to this theme; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 4 and 18 (Shiva’s Tarak Mantra); Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse nos. 1-3, section 2-3; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 22 (Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram).

According to *Tarsar Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 2, the Tarak Mantra is the following OM Namoha Narayanaya. To quote this verse in full—“Next, sage Bharadwaj asked sage Yagyavalkya, ‘What is that Tarak Mantra?’ Yagyavalkya replied, ‘The Tarak Mantra is the following—‘OM NAMOHA NARAYANAYA’. [This Manta briefly means ‘OM salutations! I bow and pay my obeisance to the supreme Lord Narayan.] It refers to the supreme, eternal, omniscient, enlightened and transcendental consciousness known as the Atma (or Brahm). It is that divine entity that should be worshipped, adored, revered and honoured. [In other words, when one worships Narayan, he is deemed to be worshipping the supreme Brahm who has revealed himself as the pure conscious Atma of the individual creature at the micro level of creation, and as the Viraat Purush called Narayan (or Vishnu) at the macro level.]

[Now the sage explains the meaning of the three words of the Mantra—] The first word ‘OM’ represents the imperishable, immutable and eternal Atma. The second word ‘NAMOHA’ represents ‘Prakriti’ or Mother Nature. The third word ‘NARAYANAYA’ stands for the macrocosmic manifestation of the un-manifested transcendental Brahm. Anyone who understands this sublime and mystical fact is able to attain or acquire the essence of ‘Amrit’, which is the ambrosia of eternity, bliss and blessedness. This eclectic knowledge is the supreme form of knowledge.

[The entire Mantra has eight letters. Now the sage explains their significance in another way—] ‘OM’ represents the supreme Brahm. The 2nd letter ‘Na’ stands for Vishnu, the sustainer of creation. The 3rd letter ‘Ma’ represents Rudra or Lord Shiva, the concluder of creation. [These two letters combine to form the second word ‘Namo’]. The 4th letter ‘Na’ symbolises ‘Ishwar’, the macrocosmic causal body of creation. The 5th letter ‘Ra’ stands for ‘Viraat’, the macrocosmic gross body of creation. The 6th letter ‘Ya’ represents ‘Purush’, the macrocosmic Male aspect of creation. The 7th letter ‘Ana’ stands for ‘Bhagwan’, the great Lord. And the last letter, the 8th, is ‘Ya’ and it symbolises ‘Parmatma’, the supreme, transcendental Atma or Soul. [The 4th till the 8th letters form the third word ‘NA-RA-YA-NA-YA’ of the holy, sublime, ethereal and mystical ‘Tarak Mantra’.] In this way, those who become enlightened about the sublime, subtle and esoteric meaning of this Tarak Mantra become great persons (honourable souls) who transcend the humdrum and become exalted, erudite, wise and superior to their fellow men. [2]”

The Mantra that has the astounding spiritual potential and mystical powers that can provide the soul of the frustrated, agitated and hapless creature trapped in the labyrinth of miseries and torments with final liberation and deliverance is called the Tarak Mantra. It helps him find freedom from all the fetters and delusions associated with this world and creation, and obtain final peace and rest for his soul.

Other Mantras can give him everything else in this creation, such as attainment of all types of Siddhis and other super-natural powers and abilities, or acquisition of other rewards such as Dharma, Artha and Kaam as mentioned in verse no. 3 of Canto 5 of the Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, or other such great achievements that are rare, but they do not provide him with ‘Moksha’ so easily as does the Tarak Mantra.

According to the Atharva Veda’s Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse nos. 1-3, the ‘Tarak’ is that aspect of the Brahm, the Supreme Being, that bestows Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) to the seeker. Therefore, Brahm is called ‘Datta’—‘one who gives’ Mukti. And the Mantra for this aspect of Brahm is ‘Hansa’.

The Tarak Mantra for Brahm, according to the Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse no. 3 is Da Hansa. To quote—“When Brahma (the creator) meditated and realised the divine form of Narayan, i.e. when he became Brahm-realised and enlightened about the Truth, he exclaimed—‘Da Hansa’. That is, the Lord who gives (‘Da’ standing for one who gives) is none but ‘Hansa’ (literally a divine Swan but implying the supreme transcendental Brahm who is the Supreme Being for whom this epithet is used). [This phrase ‘Da Hansa’ may also mean ‘the Supreme Being who gives life and consciousness to the world lives in the form of the Jiva, the creature, as his true self known as the Atma or the soul’.]

The Beej Mantra of this ‘Hansa’ qualified as ‘Da’ is ‘Dāṃ or Daam’ (i.e. the consonant ‘Da’, as pronounced in mother, with the long vowel sound of ‘Aa’ as pronounced in master, resulting in the letter ‘Daa’, and its Mantra form is ‘Dāṃ or

Daam’ where ‘m’ is silent). Hence, ‘Daa(m)’ is the one-lettered Mantra of the Supreme Being known as Narayan and Hans.

[That is, the Beej Mantra or the seed monosyllabic divine letter related to the Supreme Being, who ‘gives’ and resides in the individual creature as his ‘Atma’, is ‘Daa’.]

This Beej Mantra ‘Dāṁ or Daam’ is the Tarak Mantra of the Supreme Being known as Hansa.

One should meditate upon it. It gives freedom from having to reside in a mother’s womb and undergoing its accompanying horrors again. [That is, it frees the worshipper from having to take a birth again.] [3].”

The Atharva Veda’s *Atharvashir Upanishad*, Kandika 4, and Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8 describes that OM is the Tarak Mantra as follows—”Sage Narad asked the supreme creator Brahma—‘Oh Lord! Which is the Mantra that can help the creature to cross over or find freedom from the endless cycle of birth and death? I have humbly come to seek this knowledge from you, so please be kind to enlighten me on the subject.’ [Refer Canto 5, verse nos. 20, 26; Canto 7, verse no. 11.]

Brahma replied—‘So be it. I shall tell you about it. Oh son Narad, this Mantra known as Tarak Mantra is OM. [The word ‘Tarak’ means an instrument that provides spiritual liberation and deliverance, one that gives emancipation and salvation to the creature’s soul, a vehicle that takes across, a vehicle that can take a creature across the ocean of endless miseries and pains from which he is suffering in this world. The Tarak Mantra is a group of esoteric, ethereal and holy syllables, words or phrases having mystical powers and divine potentials that can achieve miraculous results for the adherent as they have the authority to bestow special spiritual abilities on the creature and help in his liberation and deliverance, his emancipation and salvation. The Mantra that has this potential is called the Tarak Mantra.]

OM is a personification of Brahm (i.e. it represents the supreme transcendental Divinity in its most subtle and sublime form). Hence, a wise spiritual aspirant must meditate and contemplate upon OM both as a ‘Vyasthi’ as well as a ‘Samasthi’. [Briefly, the word ‘Vyasthi’ means to treat an entity in isolation, individuality, single entity, and the word ‘Samasthi’ means totality, aggregate of things, all-inclusive. Therefore, OM is to be treated as standing for Brahm in all its manifestations—both at the micro level of creation as well as at the macro level of creation. It is to treat OM as an individual Mantra representing Brahm (‘Vyasthi’) as well as the vehicle for realising that universal cosmic Divinity that is all-pervading and all-including (‘Samasthi’).”

Refer also to Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 20, 26, and Canto 7, verse no. 110 which also endorse this view.

The Atharva Veda’s *Ganapati Upanishad*, verse no. 8 says that the Tarak Mantra for Lord Ganesh is ‘OM Gum/gun(g)’.

The Bhasma Jabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition describes two versions of Lord Shiva’s Tarak Mantra as follows—:

(i) The first is in Canto 2, paragraph no. 4 which says that the describes the eight-letter Tarak Mantra of Lord Shiva as ‘OM Namaha Maha-Devaaye’. To quote—

“The eight-letter Mantra consists of also of three words as follows—‘OM Namaha Maha-Devaaye’. [Here, the word Maha-Devaaye means the Great God or Lord. [OM + Ma + Haa + De + Vaa + Ye + Na + Maha = 8.]

The eight-letter Mantra of Shiva is known as the Tarak Mantra, the one which provides liberation and deliverance to the spiritual seeker; it ensures his emancipation

and salvation. This Mantra provides liberation and deliverance to the devotees of Lord Shiva in the Lord's terrestrial abode known as the pilgrim city of Kashi.

Preaching this Tarak Mantra of Lord Shiva is equivalent to the preaching of the Mantras of the Vedas. [In other words, this is the Veda Mantra.]”

(ii) But the same Bhasma Jabal Upanishad says in its Canto 2, paragraph no. 18 that the Tarak Mantra of Lord Shiva is the six-letter Mantra formed by adding ‘OM’ to the original five-letter Mantra ‘Namaha Shivaaye’. Hence, the final Tarak Mantra is ‘OM Namaha Shivaaye’. [OM + Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + Ye = 6. The ‘OM’ stands for salutations to the Supreme Being.]

The Tarak Mantras of Lord Ram have been elaborately described in the following Upanishads dealing with the eclectic philosophy pertaining to the divinity of Lord Ram—Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Cantos 2-3, and 5; Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-12, 41-67; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1; Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3; Canto 4, verse nos. 14; Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1-47; Canto 6, verse no. 1-6.

The Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram is elaborately described in *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition which is exclusively dedicated to Lord Ram, as well as in *Tarak Upanishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition which is dedicated to the subject of emancipation and salvation. The Tarak Mantra preached by Lord Shiva for the benefit of a dying man is that group of esoteric, ethereal and holy words, syllables or phrases that have stupendous magical, mystical and divine powers that can achieve miracles and bestows to the aspirant great potential and abilities, and one of them is the ability to find liberation and deliverance for one's own self, and when preached to others it can even liberate sinful creatures who can never expect to find emancipation themselves. It gives freedom from miseries, fears, torments and other misfortunes that devour a creature. It liberates a creature from the cycle of birth and death, the miseries and fears associated with this world, with old age, death and their accompanying horrors etc. (Atharva-shikhar Upanishad, 2/1; Advai-tarak Upanishad, 3; and Jabal Upanishad, canto 1. The ascetic/Yogi achieves liberation and deliverance by concentrating his internal thoughts at a point between the eyebrows where he realises the supreme, transcendental existence of Brahm, and he mentally one with Brahm after this realisation (Advai-tarak, 2-3).

The supreme transcendental Brahm is also known as Tarak Brahm. The word ‘Tarak’ means that which takes the creature and his soul across the virtually un-crossable ocean represented by this world and its delusions, an ocean that is also represented by the endless cycle of birth and death in which the creature is trapped eternally.

Tarak Brahm is that divine aspect of the super consciousness known as Brahm which provides the spiritual aspirant with Mukti and Moksha—i.e. final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. The formula used to achieve this eclectic goal is known as the Tarak Mantra.

The Tarak Brahm is that divine entity which can provide spiritual emancipation and salvation to the aspirant. It can liberate and deliver the creature from the endless cycle of birth and death and its accompanying torments and miseries. The word Tarak means to cause or enable to pass or cross over, to carry over, one that rescues, provides relief and succour, one that can provide liberation and deliverance to the creature from any bondage. Further, the word Tarak also refers to the ‘eye of wisdom that liberates one from the darkness of ignorance and delusions’, and it has relevance here because meditation leads to the opening of the inner ‘eye’ of insight that leads to self realisation and enlightenment. ‘Tarak’ also means a meter of 4 x 13

syllables; hence it refers also to the various Mantras used for the purpose of meditation, Mantras that have the power and the potentials to provide liberation and deliverance the soul from the cycle of birth and death.

According to the Atharva Veda's Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse nos. 1-3, the 'Tarak' is that aspect of the Brahm, the Supreme Being, that bestows Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) to the seeker. Therefore, Brahm is called 'Datta'—'one who gives' Mukti. And the Mantra for this aspect of Brahm is 'Hans'.

To quote verse no. 2 of *Dattatreya Upanishad*—"I am known as 'Datta'—one who gives. [Here it means that Lord Narayan is the Tarak, i.e. he is the One who provides—gives, bestows, grants—the worshipper with the fruit of spiritual liberation and deliverance; the one divine entity that helps the creature to find freedom from all his fetters pertaining to this entrapping world and the gross body in which his soul lives.]

Those who realise this fact, as well as those who preach this fact to others are no longer regarded as ordinary mortal creatures of the mundane and entrapping world of delusions, but are deemed to be liberated themselves as well as be a provider of liberation and deliverance to others.'

[That is, those devotees who meditate upon me and realise my truthful form also become my own image in as much as they are transformed from being a creature who is trapped in this delusory world to an enlightened being who has obtained liberation and deliverance himself, along with being empowered to liberate others. They are 'Tarak' themselves. Since I am known as 'Datta', as I am the provider—a giver, a bestower, the one who grants the boon of Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance to the devotee—the worshipper who attains me (Brahm; the spiritual Absolute Truth), becoming self-realised and Brahm-realised as a result, also becomes a 'Datta' himself as he is empowered to show the path of Mukti (liberation and deliverance) and the path of Sattva (truth) to others.]"

There are various Upanishads dealing with this aspect of meditation and spiritual deliverance which is known as Tarak. For instance especial mention can be made of the Shukla Yajur Veda's Advai Tarak Upanishad, especially its verse nos. 7 and 9, and Tarak Upanishad. As the name itself suggests, these two Upanishads are dedicated to this theme of Tarak, and they describe Tarak Brahm in all its finer connotations.

The *Ram Rahasya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 5-6, and Canto 2, verse no. 1 refer to Lord Ram as the Tarak Brahm when Hanuman preached about the Lord to some sages who wished to know the esoteric secrets about the divinity of Lord Ram, and how a creature can attain his much-cherished dream of obtaining Mukti or Moksha (liberation and deliverance, as well as emancipation and salvation respectively) by being devoted to the Lord, and using the Lord's Mantras to reach his spiritual goal. Here, Lord Ram is referred to as the Tarak Brahm.

Now, let us quote this Upanishad—

"Canto 1, Verse no. 5 = Hanuman replied, 'Oh the exalted ascetics, sages, seers and devotees of Lord Vishnu! Listen to what I have to say. It has the potential of destroying all sins and cutting through the fetters of this deluding and fearsome world (5).

“Canto 1, Verse no. 6 = It incorporates the essence of all the scriptural and metaphysical essences, their tenets, their axioms and maxims. Besides this, it is about the ‘Tarak Brahm’, i.e. it is about the Brahm who delivers one from the torments associated with this seemingly endless cycle of birth and death, and provides liberation and deliverance to its followers.

Certainly, Ram is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified. Lord Ram is an embodiment of the supreme form of Tapa (doing severe penances, observing of austerities, enduring hardships and undergoing sufferance for a noble cause). Indeed, Lord Ram is that ultimate ‘Tattwa’ (literally the essence, the fundamental or basic element or aspect) you talk about, and indeed Lord Ram is also that ‘Tarak Brahm’ referred to herein above (who provides one’s soul with the ultimate liberation and deliverance from the miseries and torments associated with this deluding and artificial world of entrapments, from the shackles that this gross body represents, as well as from the fetters created by being engrossed in ignorance and delusions pertaining to them both)’ (6).

“Canto 2, Verse no. 1 = Sage Sankadi and others asked Hanuman, ‘Oh the strong and valiant son of Anjani! Lord Ram is famous as Tarak and as Brahm (i.e. he is renowned as the one who provides liberation and deliverance to the soul of a creature, as well as is a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being himself). We request you to preach his divine and holy Mantras for the benefit of all of us.”

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(B) Japa

The Mantras are usually used to do Japa with. The ‘Japa’ is a continuous repetition of the Mantra by the spiritual aspirant or seeker of divine intervention to invoke the inherent potentials and powers of the specific Mantra to fulfil his desired objective—whether it be spiritual or mundane.

The importance of Japa, which is a repetition of the holy name of the deity representing certain particular aspects of the cosmic forces of creation, and symbolized by monosyllables or complex words or letter-combinations called a ‘Mantra’, is succinctly explained by Swami Vivekanand when he says, ‘The inaudible repetition of the Mantra, accompanied with the thinking of its meaning, is called mental repetition and is the highest type of Japa’ (Complete Works, 1/190). His Guru, the enlightened Sri Ram Krishna said, ‘Japa means silently repeating God’s name in solitude. When you chant his holy name with single minded devotion, you can see (visualise) his form and realise him. It is like reaching a piece of timber (e.g. a log of wood) floating in water and attached to the bank with a chain. By holding the chain and moving forward, link by link, you can reach the log. In the same way, by repeating God’s holy name, you become absorbed in him and finally realise him’ (Gospel of Ram Krishna, 878-9).

Japa of the Mantra has basically three forms—audible (with proper pronunciation), inaudible (just by moving of the lips), and mental (without any

external sign of repetition). The last is the best way as endorsed by Swami Vivekanand himself as above.

Regarding continual Japa of the Mantra, we must remember what Swami Vivekanand had said, 'Each deity chosen by the seeker (called his Ishta Devata) has a specific Mantra (even as each man has a specific name; it is like the relevant God's signature tune). The Mantra is the external word to express the particular ideal that the deity stands for. Constant repetition of the word helps to fix the ideal firmly in the mind' (Complete Works, 7/63) because 'as thou thinkest, so art thou' (Complete Works, 6/90—a reference to Buddha's Sermon on the Mount).

The benefit of constant Japa of Mantras can also be explained as follows— the consciousness of a man exists in three states, viz. the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep state. During the waking state, the conscious is so engrossed in performing the functions of perceptions and feelings linked with the gross body that it remains bogged down in the narrow domain of physical experiences. But when this conscious is trained to do another task simultaneously with this routine function of worldly perceptions and feelings, it can perform this new task easily with due practice. For example, it is possible for a man to train his mind to do routine, monotonous task without making an error while listening to music. On the contrary, this additional task makes his routine activities less tiring and boring because the consciousness gets detached from the usual experiences of the physical body and become relatively free for some time to focus on the other task at hand—which is listening to music or repeating the Mantra, which in their turn have a soothing effect on the tired nerves. Now, this repetition forms the background record of the subconscious or the memory bank of the mind. So, when the consciousness is in the second state of existence, that is the dreaming state, it dreams of those subjects that have been stored in its memory bank— the various inputs from the world as well as the constant psychological impact of the Mantras. The effect is obvious— the dreams become influenced by the latter influences. Finally, in the third state of deep sleep when neither the external stimuli nor the activity of the mind affect the consciousness, it (consciousness) can enjoy the sub conscious without any restraint. It is here that the Mantras, positive thinking, good or bad thoughts etc. come into play.

It is like the activation of the inner mind (sub conscious) of the man. And this is why it is emphasised that the Mantras have effect only when their meaning and import are understood because when this inner mind is activated, it comes in direct contact with the consciousness. The more erudite and classified the sub conscious, the more elevated the inner-self becomes. Just like the personality of a man is effected by, inter alia, his surroundings and circumstances, this inner-self is also enhanced or degraded in stature due to this sub conscious. Mantras, with their meanings understood (and stored in the sub conscious), uplift this inner-self of the creature. The creature becomes more spiritual and divine because it is guided by the 'inner mind' to identify itself more closely with the pure and divine Spirit (Atma/soul) in him. This Spirit is the emperor of the whole set up— it is pure consciousness, an entity that is the reporting authority for the sub conscious.

Chanting of Mantras is like caressing—gentle but effective and sustained—of the heart and the mind. When one chants softly, one's emotions become more gentle and soft, refined and elevated. Chanting or doing Japa of Mantras help to subdue or calm agitations of the mind and control it. It acts as a balm over ruffled nerves of the mind.

There is another school of thought that says that Mantras need not have a meaning, need not be understood to be effective. According to this line of thought,

Mantras resemble the cosmic sound, which according to the scriptures, was the origin of the whole cosmos. These Mantras incorporate certain sound codes that could generate specific energies because sound waves have energy. That is why different Mantras are prescribed for different uses because the specific energy needed to deal with a given set of problems will be generated by a given set of syllables producing a given set of sound waves or sonic codes.

In mythological lore, the ancient sages heard these syllables which represented the cosmic sound called 'Naad' in their inner-self in a state of trance. That is why most of the Mantras are called 'Srutis'— things that were heard and not consciously created as meaningful words. They were, in effect, a compilation of sound-elements heard or conceptualised by intuition.

Sir John Woodroffe, in his book 'The garland of letters' describes the origin of Mantras as follows— 'The Mantras are sonic patterns which represent in themselves and in all their variations all the possibilities of articulate speech in all languages'.

The chanting of the Mantras during ritual ceremonies is in a group following a specific rhythm while during individual repetition (Japa) it can be a simple murmur or done in absolute silence where the Mantra is repeated in the mind. The constant and persistent chanting and repeating of the Mantra produces a continuous stream of sound waves. Continuous Japa will create a halo of energy around the aspirant. Modern research of sound energy— especially ultrasonic—has proved that vibration at a high frequency can produce enormous amount of energy that can convert the surrounding material into vapour and ash almost instantaneously. The sound generated by the Mantras are originally subtler in level than the ultrasound, but the brain's electrical energy and strength of concentration can amplify the frequency of sound waves to beyond the limits of ultrasound. That is why ancient sages could turn to ashes anyone and anything by chanting a set of Mantras if they wished to do so. Ample examples are available in ancient texts where kings and Gods feared the wrath of sages and seers just for this reason.

Like electromagnetic waves can be captured by an appropriate instrument, e.g. radar or a dish, the sound wave energy can also be captured by the body, and the instrument here are the ear and the skin. There are many instances where creatures of the animal kingdom can receive sound impulses through their skin (e.g. snakes, earthworms). Similarly, the Mantras create a particular set of sonic wave energy that can alter the behavioral patterns of the reception centers of the objects which are targeted by the Mantras. No wonder that ancient sages used to chant Mantra for rainfall, for good harvest, for the general well-being of the society, to cast off diseases because the germs causing the diseases were either rendered ineffective or killed (e.g. in today's world, there are electronic mosquito and insect repelling electronic devices that emit ultra sonic sounds which stupefies the insect or the mosquito and it either flies off or drops dead).

In the spiritual realm, therefore, the Mantras act like radio frequencies and help the creature to establish its link with the cosmic energy field which we call 'God' and communicate with it. By extension, this one way communication established by the Mantra can be upgraded to a two way communication between the God and the creature by the means of Dhyana so that the seeker/aspirant can communicate with his chosen God.

The practice of repetition is popular because you can recite even though you can't read the text, you can repeat and recite even if your body can't endure the physical demands of meditation and rigors of spiritual practices, you can repeat and recite Mantras even while walking, breathing, cooking, waiting in a queue etc. You

can recite even amid the din of the mundane world. What is required here is firm faith, conviction and determination. The good medicine imbibed will have its effects notwithstanding your literacy or ignorance in the intricate details of the medical book, as it were.

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About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

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- (c) www.draft2digital.com (in 'e-book' version) through the following platforms: (i) Apple (ibooks), (ii) Barnes & Noble (nook), (iii) Kobo, (iv) Page Foundry, (v) Scribd, (vi) Tolino etc.:-

(A) List of Books that are currently available as mentioned above :-

(A-1) (1) The Chariot of God: Dharma Rath; (2) OM and Naad; (3) YOGA—Its Practice and Philosophy according to the Upanishads; (4) Ram Geeta; (5) The Revelation of Creation—as envisioned in the Upanishads; (6) The Pentagon of Creation: As Expounded in the Upanishads; (7) The Triumvirate of Creation; (8) Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation; (9) Surdas-Ram Charitawali; (10-a) The legend of Lord Shiva: Book 1 'Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati'; (10-b) Book 2 'Lord Shiva's Sacred Hymns'; (10-c) Book 3 'Shiva's different names & their significance, Shiva Puran, Upanishads'; (11) the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads; (13) Lord Ram's marriage with Sita (based on Tulsidas' books "Ram Charit Manas", "Janki Mangal", "Ram Lala Nahachu" & "Geetawali", and sage Veda Vyas' book "Adhyatma Ramayan"; (14) "Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram"; (15) "Vairagya Shatkam" of king-sage Bhartrihari; (16) An Anthology of the Sanyas Upanishads-Parts 1 and 2; (17) "Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan" or the "Aadi Ramayan" based on Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas; (18) The Legendary Glory of Hanuman; (19) "Narad Bhakti Sutra"—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord; (20) "Shandilya Bhakti Sutra"—Aphorisms for

Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord according to the illustrious sage Shandilya; (21) “Bhakti Sutra Mala”—A Garland of Spiritual Wisdom in the form of an Anthology of Aphorisms pertaining to Bhakti or devotion, love and affection for Lord God; (22) Glory of Lord Ram’s Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns; (23) Saints and Non-Saints: Their Distinguishing Characters and Qualities; (24) A True Guru (Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor); (25) “Sundar Kand” of Ram Charit Manas; (26) The Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka—Told in Slow Motion (based on, and will have the full relevant Text of, Ram Charit Manas, Adhyatma Ramayan, Anand Ramayan, Geetawali Ramayan, and Kavitawali Ramayan); (27) The Great Ancient Sages, Seers, Saints and Enlightened Kings of India; (28) The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads.

(A-2) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) Book 1- ‘Dohawali’; (2) Book 2- ‘Parvati Mangal’; (3) Book 3- ‘Kavitawali’; (4) Book 4- ‘Janki Mangal’; (5) Book 5- ‘Ram Lala Nahachu’; (6) Book 6- ‘Geetawali Ramayan’; (7) Book 7- ‘Vairagya Sandipani’; (8) Book 8- ‘Vinai Patrika’; (9) ‘Barvai Ramayan’.

(B) The following Books have been published in ‘Printed-Book Deluxe Editions’ by a reputed Indian Publisher (details given below) :

1. Detailed English renderings, with explanatory notes and commentaries of the 108 Upanishads classified according to the Vedic tradition = 6 volumes; 18 parts. [Vol. 1=Rig Veda Upanishads; Vol. 2= Sam Veda Upanishads; Vol. 3= Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 4= Krishna Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 5= Atharva Veda Upanishads; Vol. 6= Vedanta Concepts explained with specific references to the relevant Upanishads.]

2. English rendering of Adbhut Ramayan by sage Valmiki.
3. English rendering of Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
4. English rendering of Devi Puran’s Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
5. A Divine Biography of Lord Ram & Glory of Lord’s Holy Name.

Name and contact of Publisher of above Printed Books listed under (C):

Chaukhamba Publishing House, Delhi. [Sri Neeraj Gupta.]

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Ansari Road, Darayaganj, Delhi—110002.

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(C) Book under preparation:

A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas’ epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’ is under preparation. It will be a unique Book and an elaborate one, as it would run into many thousands of pages that would endeavour to explain each single verse of Ram Charit Manas in detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

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